FEBRUARY 2001
$4.00/£3.00

REMEMBERING DANIEL SINGER
by Percy Brazil

MONTHLY REVIEW

VOL. 52
9

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

LESSONS FROM THE NADER CAMPAIGN

The Editors

Oliver Cromwell Cox: Class, Race, and Politics

Adolph Reed Jr.

Privatization, Globalization, and the Fate of the Cities

William K. Tabb

Also: W. T. Whitney on Market Failures in US Medicine; Michael D. Yates on Books About Workers and For Workers

GENERAL PERIODICALS ROOM
FEB 2 0 2001
BROOKLYN COLLEGE LIBRARY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MONTHLY REVIEW VOLUME 52 NUMBER 9 FEBRUARY 2001

Editors:
Paul M. Sweezy
Harry Magdoff
Leo Huberman (1903-1968)

Acting Editors:
John Bellamy Foster
Robert W. McChesney

Assistant Editors:
Vicki Larson
Claude Misukiewicz

Circulation Manager:
Martin Paddio

REVIEW OF THE MONTH:
The Nader Campaign and the Future of US Left Electoral Politics
by the Editors 1

Race and Class in the Work of Oliver Cromwell Cox
by Adolph Reed Jr. 23

Privatization and Urban Issues: A Global Perspective
by William K. Tabb 33

Market Failures in US Medicine
by W. T. Whitney 41

Remembering Daniel Singer
by Percy Brazil. 46

BOOKS
About the Workers and for the Workers
by Michael D. Yates 54

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

The attention given to the Florida elections in the US presidential race has highlighted the horrendous fact that in Florida and throughout the South thirty-five years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act there are numerous ways in which African Americans are prevented from voting. Thus Florida is one of fourteen states that bar ex-criminal offenders from voting even after they have completed their sentences. In Florida alone more than 400,000 ex-criminal offenders who at one time received felony convictions but who have now completed their sentences and are no longer in prison, on probation, or on parole have been barred from voting in this way. This includes almost one-third of black men in that state and more than 200,000 potential African-American voters, 90 percent or more of whom could have been expected to vote Democrat if they had voted. This situation in Florida and other states is documented in a 1998 report entitled *Losing the Vote*, issued by Human Rights Watch and the Sentencing Project, available on-line at <http://www.hrw.org/reports98/vote/>. Given the fact that under the present criminal injustice system African Americans are far more likely to be arrested and given felony convictions than their white counterparts this becomes an effective means of political control.

In Florida the exclusion of African American voters in this fashion was pursued much more energetically, beginning in 1998, when the state government decided that the Florida voter registry be systematically scrubbed and hired a private company, DBT Online, since merged into ChoicePoint of Atlanta, to carry out the cleansing process. It has been discovered that ChoicePoint (which has close connections to the Republican Party) made numerous errors, giving Florida officials a list of names to be excluded from the voter rolls prior to the 2000 presidential elections that included thousands of individuals (dispropor-

(continued on inside back cover)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CURRENT PERIODICALS
ROOM

FEB 2 0 2001

BROOKLYN COLLEGE
LIBRARY

The Nader Campaign and the Future of US Left Electoral Politics

by the Editors

The unlikely postelection contest between Al Gore and George W. Bush, which ultimately led to the anointing of Bush as president by the Republican majority on the US Supreme Court (despite the fact that Bush received fewer popular votes than Gore both in the United States as a whole and most likely in Florida as well—the state that gave Bush his electoral college win), has tended to erase all other developments associated with the election. But all of this should not cause us to forget that the Ralph Nader Green Party campaign for the presidency was arguably the most extraordinary phenomenon in US left politics in many years. On election day he drew nearly three million votes, representing about 3 percent of the vote. Even former Vice-President Henry Wallace did not fare so well in his third-party run for the presidency in 1948, the last progressive third-party presidential campaign of this nature and magnitude. Although exit polls show that Nader received few racial minority votes (a major weakness of his campaign), he nonetheless drew his strongest support from those without a college education, those with incomes less than thirty thousand dollars a year, and those without full-time employment. Until the intense scare campaign instigated by the Democrats in the final two weeks before the election, Nader was getting as much as 7 percent in some tracking polls.

Nader ran quite far to the left on issue after issue; this was no warmed-over version of mainstream liberal Democratic politics. The Green platform was an antineoliberal progressive platform

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that any socialist could support openly. At the same time, Nader enjoyed tremendous and enthusiastic crowds on the campaign trail, often appearing before paying crowds that ranged from ten to fifteen thousand with hardly any advance work. Were there no public opinion polls, one who merely watched the size and nature of crowd responses to the candidates on the campaign trail might have thought Nader the likely winner or at least a strong contender for victory. Moreover, these crowds were dominated by young people. Such a response would have been unthinkable one or two decades ago.

Nader was the best-suited and arguably the only feasible candidate to make a progressive third-party run in 2000. He came of age in the 1960s when progressive political figures had some opportunity to gain exposure in the media culture; he has long been a household name. (As Nader notes, with the rightward shift of our political landscape and the hypercommercialism of our media culture, serious progressive critics of the status quo have had far less opportunity to gain national exposure in the past two decades, unless they are political humorists like Michael Moore or people who become celebrities for other reasons and then discuss politics, like Susan Sarandon.) He is also highly regarded for a list of accomplishments in the public interest that is nothing short of stunning. Nader turned to electoral politics only when it became clear that the degree of corporate domination over both parties made the sort of public interest work he did nearly impossible to pursue with any hope of success. Nader is not a socialist, but he is a principled democrat who has the courage to call for sweeping reforms in the political economy when it is apparent that corporate domination and class inequality are undermining democracy. Nader spoke brilliantly in plain language to everyday Americans from a range of backgrounds about the need for sweeping structural reform, a lost art among many on the left.

The issue that was the foundation of the Nader campaign was his opposition to the World Trade Organization (WTO), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the entirety of the global procapitalist trade, investment, and regulatory system.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Unlike nationalist opponents of the WTO like Pat Buchanan, Nader's opposition was on democratic grounds: these agencies were not subject to popular control in the United States or elsewhere and were therefore illegitimate. Moreover, Nader was and is arguably the world's foremost expert on exactly how these institutions of global capitalism are generating disastrous results across the planet for workers, consumers, and the environment. Nader and the Greens also favored deep cuts in the US military budget and apparatus and opposed US material support for reactionary regimes and policies around the world. Nader, who drew 19 percent of the total Muslim vote (72 percent of which went to Bush), declared that there will be no peace in the Middle East "without justice for the Palestinians." In sum, Nader and the Greens offered a progressive and nonimperialist foreign policy that was decidedly outside the "bipartisan consensus" that is almost never debated in the US electoral arena.

This is a point that merits consideration because the discussion of the Nader campaign, even on the left, has focused almost entirely on his critique of the domestic imbalance of power, giving very slight attention the international aspects. The United States is the dominant imperial power in the world and this is the central unspoken truth of our times. In the global capitalist order, the US state has a number of responsibilities: to keep the system functioning; to control the underlying populations; to safeguard the United States as the center of the international financial system; to maintain the United States (and, specifically, US capitalists/corporations) in the top perch in the imperialist pecking order; and to prevent countries from breaking away from the system of global controls. For these reasons, in addition to domestic pressure from the military-industrial complex, the United States maintains, by a very wide margin, the world's largest military, though it has no rival whatsoever in any traditional sense. Although the wider foreign policy implications of Nader's campaign were almost never reported in the media, they clearly represented a threat to the global status quo.

Indeed, Nader the candidate never got the opportunity to communicate these or any other positions to the great mass of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Americans because his campaign was absolutely butchered in the news media. Nader's coverage in the *New York Times* resembled, in some respects, the coverage Andrei Sakharov got from *Pravda* and *Izvestia* back in the 1970s. This should be no surprise but it was sobering nonetheless. Without gobs of money to purchase TV advertising—the lingua franca of US politics—or, better yet, without the sort of massive grassroots operation that could overcome the media blackout, many citizens never had any idea that Nader was running vigorously or what his positions were on the issues he was addressing. (If the winner of the election were determined by who spent the least for each of their votes or who received the least amount of news coverage per vote, Nader would have won in a landslide.) Most of the media attention Nader did receive was obsessed with how his candidacy would affect the fortunes of Democrat Al Gore. This was true even on the left and among progressives. Numerous leftists who supported Nader on the issues opposed his candidacy, often with startling bitterness, because it would take votes away from Gore, the "lesser of two evils"—which became a mantra to a greater extent than any time since 1968. The 2000 race highlighted again how the US electoral laws have a deeply conservative and undemocratic bias that increases dramatically the degree of difficulty for both third parties and progressives.

In our view, the Nader campaign was the electoral side of the mass organizing that produced the extraordinary demonstrations in Seattle in 1999 and in Washington, DC, and at the two national political conventions in 2000. As with those demonstrations, there is no guarantee that this upsurge in activism will produce a sustained movement capable of fundamentally changing the existing order. But we believe the evidence suggests that there are new openings for popular left organizing in the United States, and that the chance to organize for progressive electoral candidates is better than at any time in memory. It is possible that a left electoral movement can, within a generation, become a dominant political force in the nation. It may not be an explicitly socialist movement that will invoke the icons of the left that *MR* readers cut their teeth on but it will be a progressive anticorpo-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rate movement by any measure. There is an important and necessary role for the socialist left in this movement. The implications of these developments go well beyond the United States, in view of the US role as the dominant global capitalist power. If a viable prodemocracy, anti-imperialist movement can emerge here, it will improve the possibilities dramatically for socialists and progressives worldwide.

The Electoral Politics of the Left

It is an indication of how much times are changing that we can actually discuss the US left and electoral politics in the pages of *MR* without being purely hypothetical or dismissive. The last notable attempt at a left third-party presidential campaign was Wallace's run in 1948, the year before *MR* was founded. That Wallace was clobbered so badly was a signal that the left was under attack and entering a long period of decline. The notion of an electoral third party was soon abandoned. Many on the left, along with those generally sympathetic to the left, opted to work through the Democratic Party in the second half of the century, to make it more progressive than it would have been otherwise. Communist Party USA-instigated groups, the Democratic Socialists of America, and the Rainbow Coalition have been but a few of the vehicles used by progressives in attempts to push the Democrats to the left. Other leftists downplayed electoral work, though they usually hoped the Democrats would win (to the extent that they cared). With little to show for these efforts, it was easy for some on the left to dismiss electoral politics as inherently corrupt and limited in value, if not a waste of valuable time and resources.

The left's suspicion of political strategies that emphasize electoral politics to the exclusion of everything else, or privilege electoral strategies over all else, is firmly grounded. It is an illusion to think that electoral work is the be-all, end-all of politics. Parliamentary systems are the result of intense mass struggle, among other things, and ruling classes will invariably dismiss the results and turn to extralegal measures if their interests are threatened in a fundamental manner. Indeed, as the 2000 election highlighted, capitalist political parties will abandon their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

commitment to fairness even in squabbles with each other, let alone a socialist party. The moral of the story is that there is always a necessary place for nonelectoral (what in Europe is called "extra-parliamentary") left political work.

Viable left electoral politics has always found its basis in well-developed nonelectoral political organizations and activism. With nonelectoral popular movements in place, the electoral campaigns have a foundation to build upon, and answer to. If this link is broken and the electoral campaign achieves success yet loses touch with popular movements, bad things tend to happen. Likewise, if a progressive candidate gets caught up in the personalization of politics, and loses the necessary sense of humility and political principle, worse things tend to happen. This justifies skepticism toward, but not outright dismissal of, electoral politics. Relatively well-conducted electoral movements, like the Nader campaign or, going back in history, the Eugene Debs Socialist Party campaigns early in the century, can help build nonelectoral movements, and vice versa. Although Debs never got more than 6 percent of the vote as a presidential candidate, his campaigns were instrumental in galvanizing socialist and union organizing. And in our current closed political culture, a presidential campaign is one of the very few places where meaningful political issues can be raised at a national level and political education take place. Even with all the obstacles in its way, the Nader campaign probably exposed more Americans to progressive positions on political issues than anything else has for quite some time. The campaign was an important and necessary step to take the straightjacket off US political debate. But electoral campaigns without corresponding nonelectoral movements end up being mostly of the protest variety and of limited value.

Moreover, electoral politics does not mean simply working on presidential campaigns. It might be judged strategically sound, for example, for those on the left to emphasize referenda and other races over making another presidential run in 2004. That will depend upon circumstances that develop over the next year or two. In recent years, there has been a debate among US progressives who do electoral work over whether it is best to empha-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

size local races or national races. The argument for the former goes that local races are more winnable and less expensive and can therefore give left parties a chance to be effective and attract new supporters. The argument for the latter, like we state above, is that in a depoliticized society like the United States, it is only in presidential races that people (and the news media) will pay much attention to political ideas; it is an opportunity to be used for political education. An electoral strategy geared to the genuine transformation of society would ideally pursue both local and national races, as well as link with nonelectoral popular movements. In Brazil, for example, as Michael Löwy described in the November 2000 *MR*, the Workers' Party is using its control of local offices to democratize decision-making and bring poor people and workers into the process that determines budgets. Some of the success of the local Workers Party candidates is attributable to the publicity for the party generated by the dramatic presidential runs of Lula over the past twelve years. Eventually Lula, or another Workers' Party candidate, may win the presidency of Brazil and, if she or he does, that person likely will find an aroused and involved mass base, both in the electoral and nonelectoral arenas. It is as intriguing a recipe as we have seen for using electoral politics to assist in establishing democratic socialism.

It is the rise of several popular movements in the United States in recent years that laid the foundation for Nader's relatively successful run. To Nader's credit, he made clear the importance of nonelectoral activism to any progressive electoral movement. Likewise, Nader and the Greens always argued that the 2000 campaign was part of building a longterm majoritarian movement to overturn corporate domination of politics and the economy. These points seemingly were lost on (or dismissed by) some of the left critics of Nader, who argued that it was incomprehensible to "throw away" a vote for a lost cause like Nader and therefore assist in electing the greater of the two evils. In 1992, such a claim might have carried some weight, when Nader ran as a symbolic "protest" candidate in the New Hampshire primary, or in 1996, when he did not campaign although he was on many ballots as a candidate for president. But in 2000, with rising movements

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against sweatshops, military imperialism, corporate globalization, capital punishment, the prison-industrial complex, economic and racial inequality, and environmental devastation, among others, it would have been absurd to tell activists to bury the hatchet and work for Gore, who upon election would become their direct opponent in most battles on these issues. Indeed, exit polls showed that a large share of Nader's voters would not even have voted if Nader had not been on the ballot.

In addition to rising popular movements, and related to them, is another factor that explains the surge of interest in left third-party electoral activity: the thoroughgoing deterioration and collapse of the US electoral system over the past three decades. In discussing this deterioration of citizen participation in and influence over the electoral process, we are by no means arguing that there was a "golden age" of electoral politics in the United States to which we should return. Even at its best, electoral politics in the United States in the past century has been fairly gruesome, with the wealthy holding far too much power and the poor and working class significantly depoliticized (and in some cases, such as the Jim Crow South, disenfranchised).

In fact, far from there ever being a "golden age" of democracy in the United States, in the broadest sense the marriage of political democracy and class society has always been a contradiction. From the heyday of Athens through the founding of the United States, the major battle on the part of the ruling classes in quasidemocratic societies across the world has always been to limit the franchise, so that the propertyless majority could not dominate the wealthy few. The masses, of course, struggled to extend the franchise, and truly great democratic milestones are marked by those victories. Capitalism subtly but importantly reduced the immediate threat of political democracy by removing direct control over crucial economic matters from the political sphere to the sphere of investors seeking maximum profit. But the threat of popular rule remained and, once universal adult suffrage became the norm during the twentieth century, it posed a distinct challenge to the ruling class and to the survival of capitalism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Brute force in this context was ineffective, except in times of severe crisis. Rather, as C. B. Macpherson has written, the best way to reconcile inegalitarian economics with egalitarian politics was to foster depoliticization by the masses. Sometimes, as sociologists Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward note, this has taken the form of extraordinary measures to limit the ability of working-class and poor Americans to exercise their legal right to vote. (This is still evident in the African-American precincts in Florida where, through a number of dubious measures, tens of thousands of African-Americans who tried to go to the polls in November 2000 did not have their votes counted.) More often, it means ideological warfare by business, through various forms of public relations, to limit the capacity of working class and oppressed people to act in their own interests or, as historian Alex Carey has put it, "to take the risk out of democracy."

The net result is that in the United States, half the adult population never votes and only a bit more than one-third of the adult population votes in nonpresidential years. Whether a person is likely to vote is directly related to class: the more wealth and income a person has, the more likely that person is to vote. The higher the voter turnout, the greater the likelihood of a serious left presence in the electoral system. So it is that the greatest left victories in electoral politics have generally come in environments where 80 to 95 percent of the adult population votes.

Consider the class dimensions of voting in the United States, based on exit polls following the November 2000 election. Those Americans making less than fifty thousand dollars per year, nearly 80 percent of the adult population, accounted for only 47 percent of the voters. Or, to put it another way, the top fifth or, to be generous, the top quarter of highest income Americans accounted for more than half the votes cast. Moreover, the class bias has become more pronounced in the past twenty-five years, as an inordinate number of working-class and middle-class Americans have stopped voting, or have never begun to vote.

Those proponents of capital *über alles*, like economist Milton Friedman, are explicit in their contempt for notions of political democracy. This point must never be forgotten in the barrage of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

propaganda that equates markets with democracy, all to enhance the power of the rich at the expense of everyone else. In Friedman's dream world, people put all their energy into commercial affairs and the point of government is to protect private property. Voter disinterest, apathy, and cynicism are highly desirable, especially among those eligible voters who might have insufficient appreciation for the joys of class society and capitalist living. An informed and active public sphere, argues this line of reasoning, can only produce negative effects because it might lead to government policies that interfere with profit maximization.

The situation is not hopeless for the left, though the playing field is sloped. Working-class parties can make headway, especially if backed by powerful nonelectoral movements, most notably trade unions. So it has been that in Scandinavia, where left parties have managed to generate social policies quite beneficial to the working class although sharply opposed by nearly the entirety of the ruling class. In recent years, these victories have been cut back, as they have been under sustained attack by business. The United States has never come anywhere near the degree of left influence in electoral politics as Scandinavia. A key difference was that the ostensible "progressive" political party in the United States—the Democratic party—was always a party with strong ties to Wall Street and corporate interests and, until the 1970s, embraced by the most vicious racists and segregationists in the nation. The high-water mark for progressive electoral politics in the past century was the New Deal in the late 1930s, fueled by a massive upsurge from below and, in particular, the rise of militant trade unionism. From the standpoint of US history, some quite radical reforms reforms were passed, most notably the Works Progress Administration (WPA) under which the unemployed were given jobs fitting their abilities, working at socially useful tasks—entirely independent of the market. But even in FDR's administration many far-reaching measures that business found unacceptable were blocked or had their original purposes subverted. The left was soon met by a crushing ruling-class response that culminated in the red scare of the postwar years.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then, in the 1960s and early 1970s, as a result of massive popular protests, a range of unusually progressive domestic policies were adopted, even by such notorious figures as President Richard Nixon. The business community reacted with alarm to its decline in prestige and influence during this period. As the global neoliberal group the Trilateral Commission noted in the mid 1970s, the United States (indeed the world) was awash in a "crisis of democracy," created by the fact that traditionally apathetic poor people, young people, women, and people of color were getting too involved in the political process. They did not use the term "crisis of democracy" with any sense of irony.

In response to this "crisis of democracy," the stage was set for our current predicament. The concern of the right in the 1970s was that, in the prevailing culture, capitalist business as usual, militarism, and "being tough on crime" were regarded as negative factors and there was far too much sympathy for the interests of workers, women, ethnic minorities, poor people, and the environment, along with approval for aggressive government policies to serve these interests. The political right mounted a well-funded, full-throttle ideological assault on labor unions, social welfare policies, and "liberalism." This assault took many forms, including lavish monies spent by rightwing foundations and business groups to push the media debate to the right and make it more probusiness, which was assisted by the deregulation of media ownership.

Today the range of political commentary in the news media extends from the far right to the neoliberal "center," and in a medium like commercial radio there is hardly anything but the right. What passes for political journalism effectively bounces between the walls of legitimate debate that are set by the two main parties. It is easily manipulated by the powerful and highly resistant to, and contemptuous of, issues and positions that fall outside the narrow mainstream. The assault also pushed university teaching and research to the right. The use of sophisticated propaganda techniques and fire-tested buzzwords, like "markets," "entrepreneurs," "competition," "deregulation," "growth," and "choice" abounded. As has been well documented, the campaign

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has been remarkably successful. In short, the political right ideologically promoted an environment conducive to the adaptation of ferociously antilabor, probusiness neoliberal policies in the United States and worldwide—policies which had been anathema to the vast majority of citizens for generations.

Democrats and Republicans Go Right

A critical development in the rightward turn of the US electoral culture has been the demise of progressive forces having any meaningful influence in the higher reaches of the Democratic Party. Business has always been important in the Democratic Party and the campaign to increase corporate influence grew after progressive George McGovern won the nomination in 1972 and wrote the most anticorporate platform since Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1936 campaign. But the main institutional development in this regard was the rise and operation of the business-funded Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) under Bill Clinton and Al Gore, among others, starting in 1985. The explicit purpose of the DLC was to make the Democrats as decidedly probusiness and promilitary as the Republicans. It was the DLC that pushed the Democrats to adopt neoliberal policies like industry deregulation, budget balancing at all costs, privatization of public services, lower business taxes, and support for global corporate trade deals like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and NAFTA. For its traditional constituencies of women, minorities, environmentalists, and labor it offered a far smaller feast of lukewarm support for civil rights, affirmative action, abortion rights, and the oft-repeated argument that "hey, we are nowhere near as bad as the Republicans." But genuine progressive policies like single-payer health insurance, equalization of school spending, demilitarization of the political economy, quality public transportation, increasing the ability of workers to form trade unions, reducing economic inequality, rehabilitation rather than retribution for those convicted of violent crimes, opposition to drug prohibition, and guaranteed employment at a living wage—most of which had a viable basis of support within

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Democratic circles in the 1970s—were fully purged from the party platforms with the DLC's inspiration and guidance.

The transformation of the Democrats was fully accomplished over the past eight years. A turning point came when Clinton selected Gore as his vice-presidential candidate in 1992. Prior to that date, conservative or centrist Democrats like Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter had "balanced" the ticket with liberals like Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale. With Clinton's selection of Gore, it was a formal recognition that the liberal wing of the party was losing serious clout. Any short list of the major legislative accomplishments of the Clinton-Gore administration would include: passage of a Draconian crime law; the approval of NAFTA and GATT and the creation of the WTO; the Telecommunications Act of 1996; the elimination of federal welfare guarantees to poor children and single mothers; and maintenance and expansion of military spending. These are all issues traditionally championed by the right wing of the Republican Party. There are hardly any progressive measures anywhere to be found on the Clinton-Gore report card and not one major issue where they squared off with the needs of the wealthy and put all their influence on the line to go to bat for their voting base.

Moreover, reports by administration insiders like former Labor Secretary Robert Reich indicate that in cabinet debates over nearly all of these issues, it was Vice-President Al Gore who generally pushed for the most conservative, probusiness position. The dominance of the "New Democrats" within the party emerged in full force in 2000, when they cornered the entire market on presidential aspirants, for a number of reasons but notably because the exorbitant cost of campaigning scared off all but those who could comfortably nuzzle up to the money trough. Hence, the "liberal" primary challenger to Al Gore was Bill Bradley, another DLC poster child, described approvingly by one conservative as second only to Robert Rubin as "Wall Street's favorite Democrat." His liberalism was based, apparently, on a more sincere and higher grade of rhetoric for the dispossessed. Then, as the icing on the "New Democrat" cake, when Gore won the nomination, he selected Joseph Lieberman, the current DLC chair, as his run-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ning mate., Gore, the most conservative Democratic nominee since 1924, managed to locate one of the only Democratic Senators whose record was even more cravenly probusiness than his own. The Republican *Wall Street Journal* was left fumbling, as it had to acknowledge that Lieberman was as devoted to the interests of the capitalist class as nearly any other member of Congress, party notwithstanding.

Another part of the DLC agenda—one that received considerably greater discussion in the news media—was the need for the Democrats to appeal to more socially conservative voters "turned off" by what was perceived as the Democrat's allegiance to the interests of women, gays and lesbians, poor people, marijuana smokers, and ethnic minorities. This was especially important because all the Clinton-Gore-Lieberman rhetoric about the evils of Republicans could not keep an increasing percentage of poor and working-class voters from dropping out of the electoral process in the 1990s, for quite rational reasons. Attracting socially conservative white males (who used to be called "Reagan Democrats") to the Democrats was to be accomplished by being super tough on crime and drug use, and supporting capital punishment and militarism. The notion that a more fruitful way to generate new votes would be to appeal to the nonvoting 50 percent of the population—disproportionately poor and working class—with a platform that delivered the goods rather than piles of rhetoric was never even countenanced, as that went directly against the probusiness orientation of the DLC, the interests of the party's corporate benefactors, and the imagination of the braindead punditocracy in the news media.

A real progressive platform might also have appealed to many working-class social conservatives, who are rarely given a reason to vote other than their attitude toward issues like guns, school prayer, and the death penalty. Indeed, Republicans—who seem to have a firmer grasp of how to win or steal elections than many Democrats—live in fear of such a "populist" strategy on the part of Democrats. This led to constant preemptory attacks on the Democrats for initiating "class warfare," as if this were a very bad thing, at the slightest sign that Democrats were appealing to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

economic interests of the working class. The DLC Democrats fall all over themselves to repudiate the Republican charges, for fear of scaring off their wealthy and corporate benefactors, not to mention their own actual political views. Today the lack of class consciousness among the Democrats is palpable, and a clear majority of the party's candidates and officials have backed off from any marked differentiation of politics on economic lines.

The effort by the Democrats to move "rightward" for votes was a thoroughgoing flop in the 2000 presidential election. The "New Democrat" record notwithstanding, the Republicans paint the Democrats as the party of tax-and-spend maniacs and social liberals. "We were hurt," said DLC president Al From, exhibiting the tortured logic that insists the Democrats head ever more rightward, "because we were viewed in this election as being too liberal and too much in favor of big government." The truth is that nearly every state that Al Gore won in 2000 could have been won, arguably, by someone like Senator Paul Wellstone from the party's most liberal wing, assuming they had anywhere near the campaign war chest Gore commanded. (And, by our reasoning, had a Wellstone pressed economic issues on class lines in a manner that would have scared the pants off the DLC, the Democrats might have made much larger inroads with the white working class and even nonvoters.) The appeal to social conservative white males did not even net Gore historically Democratic states like West Virginia, Bill Clinton's Arkansas, or Gore's own home state of Tennessee; if conservative credibility is one's criteria for voting, people logically will tend to go to what is perceived as the genuine (Republican) article.

So it is one of great ironies of our times that Democrats like Gore and Lieberman can only win elections by getting enormous support from what remains of the traditional progressive coalition of African-Americans, Latinos, labor, feminists and environmentalists. (Early in the fall, Americans witnessed the ludicrous spectacle of Gore seeking to attract voters by proclaiming his commitment to populism and protecting the little people from corporate bullies, even as Lieberman told the *Wall Street Journal* that business should pay no attention to Gore, because it was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meaningless rhetoric only meant to get voters, not a discussion of actual policies that might be implemented.) African-Americans alone provided some 20 percent of all of Gore's votes in 2000. Yet in return, these voters get crumbs, while the DLC's big money backers get the keys to the country.

It was only a matter of time until there was a revolt in the ranks, like the one represented in 2000 by the Nader campaign. The Democrats' absolute reliance on progressive voters, along with the party's absolute refusal to offer progressive policies, might explain the hysterical tone as well as the unprincipled and generally groundless nature of the attacks on Nader and his presidential campaign by Democrats and liberal leaders in 2000. A candid and honest debate over the Clinton-Gore record and the likely contours of a Gore-Lieberman administration was the last thing liberal Gore apologists wanted. Instead, the refrain heard over and over was, "regardless of what you think of Gore, he is vastly superior to the Republicans." (Curiously, the Republicans, hardly an upstanding bunch in any calculation, appeared far more charitable toward Ross Perot, who did serious damage to their presidential chances in 1992. Likewise, they pretty much laid off attacking Pat Buchanan in 2000, even though evidence suggests he may have done more damage to Bush than Nader did to Gore in the electoral college.)

This "lesser-of-two-evils" mantra is predicated on the sheer evil of the Republican Party and this leads to a less noted but quite significant development in US politics over the past forty years: the consolidation of the Republican Party as a hard right, militantly neoliberal party. For much of this century, and well into the 1960s, the Republican Party included a liberal wing, featuring many prominent figures with political records well to the left of Clinton, Gore, and Lieberman. When Lieberman first won his Senate seat in 1988, he did so by running from the right against arguably the last of the Senate Republican liberals, Lowell Weicker. Lieberman redbaited Weicker on foreign policy and had the support of William F. Buckley and the rightwing Cuban terrorist crowd.

In the past, the Republicans also had a moderate or centrist wing, typified by someone like Dwight Eisenhower. This offered

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

progressive constituencies a modicum of competition for their votes in some instances. As late as 1960, for example, around one-third of African-Americans voted for Nixon rather than Kennedy for president. But the hard right takeover of the party, beginning with Goldwater and culminating in Reagan, left conservatives like Bob Dole and George Bush as the "moderates" and the liberals like John Lindsay, Earl Warren, John Anderson, and Pete McCloskey nowhere to be found. And what is called "conservatism" today has none of the principled commitment to individual liberty, small-scale institutions and the rule of law, or a skepticism toward market excess and imperialism, that was seen occasionally in earlier versions. This is a conservatism that is dedicated purely to serving the needs of the wealthy under any and all circumstances and to seizing power by any means necessary. It is this new Republican Party with its bare-knuckle, know-nothing "conservatism" that opened the door for the DLC strategy to push the Democrats to the right. Now the Democrats could march into Wall Street's open arms with little fear of losing progressive voters to the Republicans

The bankruptcy of the US electoral system is not merely that it is well under the thumb of the rich and powerful and has a range of debate more suitable to a quasidictatorship than to a self-governing people. It is also that the electoral and governing systems have became grotesquely corrupt. It is one of capitalism's contradictions that it ostensibly works best when there is a culture dominated by the rule of law and a governing system typified by transparency, integrity, and civic virtue. Indeed, mainstream pundits and academics often argue that it is the lack of these attributes in the "crony capitalism" of Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia that prevents sustained economic growth. Yet capitalism, with its incessant pressure to reward personal greed and penalize altruism, invariably eats away at any public service values and institutions if they stand in the way of profit. That is why whenever neoliberal policies gain the upper hand in a nation, they almost invariably lead to a tidal wave of corruption. So it has been with electoral political culture in the United States—as symbolized by the renting out of the Lincoln bedroom in the White House.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Corporate domination of the electoral process in the United States is locked in by a campaign system that requires enormous sums of money for candidates to have almost any chance of being victorious. The cost of the 2000 federal election campaigns was well over three billion dollars, up some 40 percent from 1996, which was up 40 percent again from 1992. Much of this money goes to pay for manipulative and insulting TV advertisements.

Unless candidates can afford TV advertising, they lose their place in the tireless roundups presented by the news media, and they cannot answer TV ads that attack them by their opponents, which has proven to be mandatory for winning races. Most of this money comes from powerful and wealthy corporations and individuals. Ninety percent of the money that comes from individual campaign contributions, for example, comes from the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans.

Senator Russell Feingold (D-Wisconsin) has accurately described the electoral system as one of "legalized bribery and legalized extortion." Corporations need to make hefty campaign contributions to guarantee a slice of the action when Washington doles out the goodies. Hence, scores of major corporations gave at least one hundred thousand dollars to both political parties in 2000. Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation was a classic example of how two-party politics works nowadays. His Fox News Channel served as little more than a propaganda dispenser for the Bush campaign in 2000; at the same time Murdoch was funneling hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Democrats and candidate Gore. That way, whichever party wins, Murdoch wins. And so it is for the wealthy and corporate America. The "room for maneuver" against the interests of capital in mainstream US political culture—never very pronounced—has all but disappeared. And in the "screw you, I'm out for number one" culture that comes with the rule of money, the entire governing process has become a stinking cesspool of corruption. The bamboo prison of class rule has become an iron cage.

But the situation is anything but locked in for all time or even for very long at all. This is a political moment with notable openings for progressive organizing, electoral and otherwise. There

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are several reasons for this. In the broadest sense, although depoliticization is a rational immediate response to the status quo, it is untenable over the long haul. People are social beings and politics goes a long way toward shaping the quality of our lives. Social problems require social solutions, and all the public relations and spinmeisters in the world cannot eliminate that truth. This is especially true in a world with enormous social inequality, and where the civic religion is the bankrupt notion that "you are what you own." In the United States, 1 percent of the population now has more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. As Canadian singer Bruce Cockburn explains, "the trouble with normal is it always gets worse." The corruption of the US political system assures that conditions will only get worse for most Americans. When the dispossessed and disaffected believe that political activity can improve their lives, they get politically active and change the world. Hence, as noted above, we have seen the emergence of a new wave of social activism in the past few years. But there are openings for progressive politics that go far beyond that.

A crucial difference today from, say, forty years ago, is that support for and enthusiasm toward the political status quo is paper thin. Only 48 percent of adult Americans voted for Gore and Bush in the 2000 election. Of those, one-half said they did not really care for the candidate they voted for, they were voting against the other candidate. So that leaves 12 percent that actually supported each candidate, and we suspect a significant percentage of those voters were people who vote habitually for the Democrat or the Republican, regardless of the candidate. And it goes well beyond the personalities of specific politicians. The neoliberal thrust of Reagan Republicans has lost whatever steam it had among voters; George W. Bush and many Republicans actually ran for office in 2000 on the claim that they will use the government to improve social security, healthcare, and education. It is notable, too, that the Republicans have concluded that openly attacking gays, lesbians, and feminists and making more coded attacks on immigrants and African-Americans are also counterproductive to the goal of winning elections. We have already explained the failure of the DLC approach to attract

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

popular support, such that Gore was forced to run as a pseudopopulist to find enough votes to win. What is striking, and what has been confirmed in research by political scientist Joel Rogers and others for many years now, is that the voting electorate seems open to more progressive policies than either party is willing or able to offer. And this does not even take into consideration the one hundred million Americans who do not vote, who are disproportionately poor, working-class, young, and people of color. It is here that the foundation of progressive electoral politics lies.

New Openings and New Uncertainties

In short, the opening for progressives to engage in electoral work in the coming years is clearly wider than it has been in some time. This new opening is emerging not as an alternative to non-electoral organizing, but as a complement to a vibrant mass movement arising outside of the electoral sphere. Nevertheless, there are severe obstacles in the way, which may undermine left electoral activity. In particular, reactionary electoral laws that make it extremely difficult to launch a viable third party, as well as a campaign system that requires enormous amounts of money to reach potential voters (and counteract scurrilous charges by well-heeled opponents), have a deadening political effect. (US Representative Tom DeLay [R-Texas] candidly and approvingly admits that having the wealthy bankroll the electoral system virtually guarantees that the "free market" will never face a significant political challenge.) Without these laws and this campaign finance system—say the United States had a system of proportional representation and publicly funded campaigns for all parties—the actual support for the Republicans and Democrats would plummet. Our own guess is the two parties would soon receive the same percentage of the vote—say, 30 to 40 percent—that the old Communist Parties have gotten in parts of Eastern Europe after elections were opened to multiple parties. But their duopoly and the protection of their wealthy benefactors are dependent upon this system, so they are loath to change it.

Still, the debacle in Florida has opened the opportunity for a national debate about electoral systems. Necessary electoral

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reforms are now taken seriously—ranging all the way from publicly financing elections, making election day a paid holiday, allowing convicted felons who have done their time the right to vote, and registering voters on election day, to even more radical arguments for proportional representation, instant runoff voting, and other steps that would eliminate the case for lesser-of-two-evil voting.

Simply succumbing to the lesser-of-two-evils logic means that progressives should never challenge Democrats in general elections, even if they are as heinous as Gore and Lieberman, because they will only take votes away from the Democrat and assist in electing the greater of two evils, the Republican. This was an argument made not only by people who hate the left like Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* and many mainstream Democratic hacks (all determined to see Al Gore regarded as the left wing of legitimate thought). It was also made by former radicals who still flash their left credentials to earn holier-than-thou points in academia despite the fact that they are increasingly willing to accept the status quo as the best of all possible worlds, the be-damned-glad-to-have-Gore-instead-of-a-Republican crowd. Were that the extent of the criticism, it could be easily dismissed.

But the lesser-of-two-evils critique was also made by serious leftists who understand how terrible Gore and the Democrats are and who believe we can and must blow open the range of legitimate debate, but who argue that the third party option simply cannot work. In their view, the only option is to work within the Democratic Party, using a left caucus to advance progressive candidates and policies—much like the DLC moved the party to the right. Their argument is that it will be easier to take over the Democrats, or at least gain a dominant position in the party, than it would be to launch a new party that has any hope of contending for power in a system rigged by the two major parties. After all, a significant portion of the current voting base already is relatively progressive, certainly well to the left of the DLC. Indeed, the argument goes, if third party efforts only succeed in putting Republicans in office, they will open up deadly splits on the left, and between left organizers and progressive constituencies.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

These are serious concerns not to be dismissed categorically. But it bears repeating that the Democratic Party has been restructured in such a manner over the past two decades as to make the possibility of a McGovern-type insurgency campaign, not to mention something to the left of that, far less plausible. The Democratic Party, at its commanding heights, is now so linked with the needs of business and the military and has so completely cast off its New Deal past, that the routine litmus test of support for the party's candidates means endorsing an increasing number of truly dreadful candidates, like Gore and Lieberman. Any progressive approach for working within the Democratic party that has to water down its critique of the DLC one iota, or that pays its dues by serving as an attack dog on the third-party left, as seemingly was the case in 2000, almost by definition undermines the very goal it professes: to make the left more powerful in the United States.

There is no doubt that the fundamental electoral challenge for the coming generation on the left is the establishment of a viable working-class-based, antineoliberal political party that will be strong enough and large enough to contend for power. Barring a change in electoral laws, it is arguable that this party will only succeed if it is one of the existing two main parties or a new force that has displaced one of them. This means the Democratic party cannot simply be dismissed. Moreover, many traditional Democratic voters are going to have to be part of any progressive electoral movement, as well as some progressive Democratic elected officials. If those relationships explode, the entire progressive electoral project will be set back, perhaps irreparably. But because of the inherent difficulty in taking over the Democratic party and the party's severe limitations at present, the prospect of developing a viable third party will continue to be raised. The situation calls for caution rather than bombast, organization rather than polemics. In the near term, at least, it may be wise to work both sides of the street, continue building the movement at the grassroots level, and see how events unfold. Principled progressives should be able to find a solution to this problem, though it will take time and may be influenced by circumstances beyond our control.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Race and Class in the Work of Oliver Cromwell Cox

by Adolph Reed Jr.

Oliver Cromwell Cox's *Caste, Class, and Race* was first published in 1948 by Doubleday, which, in line with the anti-leftist imperatives of the time, almost immediately let the book go out of print. Fortunately, it was reissued in 1959 by Monthly Review Press, which has enabled subsequent generations to read Cox's extraordinary text. Indeed, I discovered Cox through Monthly Review's Modern Reader paperback edition in 1970; coincidentally, that was also the year of the only occasion on which I heard him speak, at the annual meeting of the Association of Social and Behavioral Scientists, the black social scientists' group.

Cox is a curious figure in black American and left intellectual life. He is difficult to fit into a genealogy of black intellectuals or activists. Unlike some of his contemporaries, such as Ralph Bunche, Abram Harris, or E. Franklin Frazier, Cox was not particularly prominent within the racial advocacy or political activist groups of the day, though he did comment on contemporary affairs in venues such as the *Journal of Negro Education*. Cox neither produced a school of intellectual followers nor does he seem to have passed on his professional DNA through the founding of an interpretive tendency or the production of a visible cohort of students who would trace their intellectual lineage through him. Moreover, although he earned a doctorate in sociology from the

Adolph Reed Jr. is a professor of political science at New School University and the author of *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon, W. E. B. Du Bois and American Political Thought, Stirrings in the Jug,* and *Class Notes.*

This article is reprinted from *Race,* the new shortened edition of Oliver Cromwell Cox's *Caste, Class, and Race* (Monthly Review Press, 2000.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

University of Chicago, his work differed in focus and intellectual disposition from that of other black scholars associated with the Chicago School, including Frazier, Charles S. Johnson, and even St. Clair Drake, who shared with Cox an orientation that was at least compatible with and probably sympathetic to Marxism.

Cox stands out, however, as a scholar whose work consistently and rigorously proceeded from the conviction that making sense of the meaning of race and the character of race relations in American life requires an understanding of the dynamics of capitalism as a social system and its specific history in this country. *Caste, Class, and Race* was Cox's most elaborate attempt to follow through on that conviction. This new, abbreviated Monthly Review Press edition reprints *Race*, the third section of *Caste, Class, and Race*, which comprised nearly half of the original volume. This should make the central thrust of Cox's critique more accessible, if only because *Caste, Class, and Race*'s length—nearly six hundred pages of text—made the book seem overly daunting to many potential readers. Moreover, Cox's meticulous, if suspiciously formalistic, discussion of the Indian caste system that was the topic of the more-than-one-hundred-page Part One of the original book is easily dispensable for contemporary readers. Cox's consideration of the Indian caste order was preliminary to the argument that he laid out in *Race* against a scholarly tendency in the study of American race relations that had gained momentum during the interwar years, a tendency that invoked the metaphor of caste to describe racial stratification in the United States.

Cox took pains to chart the differences between the Indian caste system and the dynamics of racial stratification in this country, and he argued that the dissimilarities of the two systems were so great that the caste notion could not clarify American race relations. However, his main brief against the "caste school of race relations" was that it abstracted racial stratification in the United States from its origins and foundation in the evolution of American capitalism. In so doing, he argued, the caste school treated racial hierarchy as if it were a timeless, natural form of social organization. The caste approach to the study of American

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

race relations has not been in vogue for several decades; other equally misleading metaphors have long since supplanted it.

Cox's critique of the caste school was linked to his broader view of the inadequacy and wrong-headedness of attitudinal or other idealist approaches to the discussion of racial inequality. He emphatically rejected primordialist notions of racial antipathy or ethnocentrism as explanations of racial stratification. He insisted that racism and race prejudice emerged from the class dynamics of capitalism and its colonial and imperial programs. This was the basis of his critical assessment of other prominent tendencies in the liberal scholarly treatments of American race relations, including the work of Robert Park and Ruth Benedict, as well as Gunnar Myrdal's singularly influential volume, *An American Dilemma.*

Cox believed that the theories of Robert Park, one of the founders of the Chicago School of Sociology and Booker T. Washington's former ghostwriter, in effect naturalized notions of fundamental difference in two ways. First, said Cox, Park alleged that "the beginnings of modern race prejudice may be traced back to the immemorial periods of human associations." Second, Park maintained that the racial subordination that prevailed in the South stemmed from custom and "mores," a static, ahistorical notion of core beliefs and norms around which populations supposedly cohere organically. Similarly, while acknowledging that Ruth Benedict, the anthropologist of race relations and a former student of Franz Boas, improved on Park in recognizing racism's historically specific, modern origins, Cox objected to Benedict's construing of racism as an example of a universal tendency to ethnocentrism. The consequence, he argued, was that Benedict "conceives of race prejudice as essentially a belief and gives almost no attention to the materialistic source of the rationalization." In his critique of Myrdal, the Swedish economist and sociologist commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation to produce a systematic study of American race relations, Cox was most critical of the tendency to locate American racial dynamics within abstract, transhistorical dispositions or attitudes. Myrdal's *An American Dilemma,* Cox charged, was built around an evasion, the attempt to avoid a class analysis of American race relations. Thus

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Myrdal resorted to explaining American racism through airy, reified formulations, such as assertion of tensions and ambivalence around an idealized American Creed or a struggle for the "national soul." Because the Myrdal study has had such lasting influence on American racial discourse, quoting Cox's summary judgment of the document is useful both for clarifying his critique and for giving a flavor of his intellectual style.

> *An American Dilemma*, the most exhaustive survey of race relations ever undertaken in the United States, is for the most part a useful source of data. In detail it presents many ingenious analyses of the materials. But it develops no hypothesis or consistent theory of race relations; and, to the extent that it employs the caste belief in interpretations, it is misleading. Clearly, the use of "the American Creed" as the "value premise" for his study severely limits and narrows Dr. Myrdal's perspective. Even though we should grant some right of the author to limit the discussion of his subject to its moral aspects, he still develops it without insight. He never brings into focus the two great systems of morality currently striving in our civilization for ascendancy, but merely assumes a teleological abstraction of social justice toward which all good men will ultimately gravitate. Moreover, since we can hardly accuse him of being naïve, and since he clearly goes out of his way to avoid the obvious implications of labor exploitation in the South, we cannot help concluding that the work in many respects may have the effect of a powerful piece of propaganda in favor of the status quo. If the "race problem" in the United States is preeminently a moral question, it must naturally be resolved by moral means, and this conclusion is precisely the social illusion which the ruling political class has constantly sought to produce.

Cox advanced a perspective on race, racial difference, and racial stratification that we would today describe as a social constructionist view. Bypassing biological or physical anthropological definitions, he proposed that "race may be thought of as simply any group of people that is generally believed to be, and generally accepted as, a race in any given area of ethnic competition." (He defined an ethnic group as "a people living competitively in a relationship of superordination or subordination with some other people or peoples within one state, country or economic area.") He acknowledged that such races are not real in the sense of having a meaning and content apart from the specific patterns of social relations in which they are enmeshed; he opted for a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"social definition of the term race." Cox did not address in any depth the empirical or biological status of race as a category for sorting human populations. Indeed, he made no attempt to refute racist pseudoscience, contending that "the laboratory classification of races, which began among anthropologists about a hundred years ago, has no necessary relationship with the problem of race relations as sociological phenomena. Race relations developed independently of anthropological tests and measurements." Nevertheless, the thrust of his argument was a clear refutation of such scientific racialism.

For Cox, race was most fundamentally an artifact of capitalist labor dynamics, a relation that originated in slavery. "Sometimes, probably because of its very obviousness," he observed, "it is not realized that the slave trade was simply a way of recruiting labor for the purpose of exploiting the great natural resources of America." This perspective led to one of Cox's most interesting and provocative insights, that "racial exploitation is merely one aspect of the problem of the proletarianization of labor, regardless of the color of the laborer. Hence racial antagonism is essentially political-class conflict." We should not make too much of the adverbs "simply" and "merely." Seeing race as a category that emerges from capitalist labor relations does not necessarily deny or minimize the importance of racial oppression and injustice or the need to fight against racism directly.

Contrary to the claims of critics such as David Roediger, Cox did not dismiss racism among working-class whites. He argued that "the observed overt competitive antagonism is produced and carefully maintained by the exploiters of both the poor whites and the Negroes." He recognized that elite whites defined the matrix within which non-elite whites crafted their political agency, and he emphasized the ruling-class foundations of racism as part of his critique of the liberal scholars of race relations who theorized race relations without regard to capitalist political economy and class dynamics. Cox's perspective goes right to the heart of how we should try to understand race by encouraging us to move beyond categories for defining and sorting supposedly discrete human populations, beyond concepts of racial hierar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chies, and beyond racist ideologies—all components of a singular, indivisible unholy trinity—and instead recognize that race is the product of social relations within history and political economy. More than a half-century after its initial publication, Cox's interpretation is a refreshing alternative to the idealist frames that have persisted in shaping American racial discourse and politics. The lucidity and groundedness of his interpretation stand out strikingly, for example, in relation to ontological arguments the equivalent of devil theories that either trace racism back to the Ice Ages or attribute racism to ideas of the Enlightenment; his viewpoint contrasts just as sharply with arresting but uninformative and strategically useless metaphors, such as the characterization of racism as a "national disease" or the chestnut that racism "takes on a life of its own" or other such mystifications. Racism is not an affliction; it is a pattern of social relations. Nor is it a thing that can act on its own; it exists only as it is reproduced in specific social arrangements in specific societies under historically specific conditions of law, state, and class power.

Cox was not a political strategist; he did not approach political analysis with the instrumentalist specificity of an organizer or cadre. Nor did he ever affiliate with or move in the orbit of any political organization. He did not propound a clearly defined path for pursuit of the radical social and economic change that he viewed as necessary. Like many intellectuals of his era the vision of revolution embraced by W.E.B. Du Bois in his 1928 novel, *The Dark Princess*, comes most readily to mind. Cox gravitated toward a view of radical political change that by and large lacked a complex vision of popular agency. He considered the working-class political party, the labor party, to be the vehicle for effecting transformation to socialism, but he opposed parliamentary gradualism as hopeless. Similarly, he recognized the union as the basic organizational form of the working class. Although he acknowledged business unionism's accomplishments, he condemned it as divisive and inimical to class struggle. However, he did not engage in issues bearing either on political processes and participation within the movement or strategies for building solidarity and broadening the political base within the working class,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

except insofar as he endorsed in very general terms the principle that the political class organization should represent not just the unionized, but all workers, on the model of the nineteenth-century Knights of Labor.

I suspect that the limitation of his strategic vision was reinforced by the combination of his teleological faith in capitalism's inevitable replacement by socialism and an apocalyptic notion of revolution as the mechanism of millennial change. If the script is already written and a quantum leap is the sole necessary and sufficient condition for its realization, then there is little need to puzzle over how to get there from here. The only warrant is to preach the gospel and wait for enlightened adherents. This view suggests the convergence of Fabian and revolutionary notions of transformation, and as a practical matter it emphasizes the place of intellectuals as propagators of the gospel. It also devalues, or at least ignores the significance of, democratic, participatory processes for creating and shaping the sort of class-conscious movement that Cox calls "political-class struggle" on which the goal of social transformation must depend. This mindset may also reflect Cox's failure to break with the familiar petit-bourgeois romance of revolution as *jacquerie*, and it quite likely blunted his critique of the idea of black race leadership.

In the early post–Second World War period the notion of the race leader as the source of effective black political agency retained conceptual force in conventional American racial discourse. Myrdal and other scholars and commentators assumed the category to be central for understanding black political action. However, the model of singular race spokesmanship, embodied most prominently by Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey, was being supplanted by a more plural, organizationally–based racial advocacy. Perhaps it was the disjunction between the new political forms and the residual rhetoric of leadership that led Cox to be so sharply and perceptively critical of the "persistent lament" that black Americans lacked a "great leader, whose function must be to bring about solidarity among Negroes." He argued that no such entity could ever emerge, characterizing it as a fantasy. The black race leaders, he argued,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> must be specialists in the art of antagonistic cooperation. Their success rests finally in their ability to maintain peace and friendship with whites; yet they must seem aggressive and uncompromising in their struggle for the rights of Negroes. They dare not identify all whites as the enemy, for then they will themselves be driven together into a hostile camp. This tentative nature of Negro solidarity presents a particularly baffling problem for the Negro leader. He must be a friend of the enemy. He must be a champion of the cause of Negroes, yet not so aggressive as to incur the consummate ill will of whites. He knows that he cannot be a leader of his people if he is completely rejected by whites; hence no small part of his function is engaged in understanding the subtleties of reaction to the manipulation of the whites of his community. No contemporary Negro leader of major significance, then, can be totally void of at least a modicum of the spirit of "Uncle Tom"; ingratiation, compromise, and appeasement must be his specialties.

Cox's critique of black leadership stemmed partly from his own political teleology; in his view black Americans' "destiny" was "integration and fusion with the larger American society." "To develop a powerful leader," he argued, "Negroes must retract themselves, as it were, from their immediate business of achieving assimilation, and look to him for some promised land or some telling counterblow upon their detractors." Not only was this course hopeless because of the limits and contradictions of the actual practice of race leadership that he described, but Cox felt also that it played into the hands of the opponents of black aspiration.

Cox's analysis of black leadership was incisive and insightful, though not in tune with the style of race-conscious politics that originated in the Black Power era of the late 1960s and early 1970s and is hegemonic today. Yet his critique did not cut quite to the core of the problem with the notion of a race leader: that its ideal of an individual or individuals "whose function must be to bring about solidarity among Negroes" presumes the existence of or potential for a unitary racial consciousness. This in turn underscores a connection between the leaders and the led that circumvents or suppresses questions of genuine political differentiation, accountability, and popular participation. For Cox and other of his radical contemporaries, such as the elder Du Bois

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Ralph Bunche in the 1930s and early 1940s, this inattentiveness to democratic concerns among black Americans was in tension with the larger egalitarian commitments of their politics. The imagery of "the masses" obscured and perfumed that tension, justifying a view of the rank-and-file population as fundamentally monolithic and passive by associating it with the rhetoric of apocalyptic revolution, according to which this population contains within it an emergent collective political subject, indeed the crucial political subject. The promise of paramount political agency in the millennial future could thus substitute for attention to popular agency and democratic participation in the present. Besides, to Cox and other black radicals operating before the victories of the civil rights movement, assuming an unproblematic racial political consensus simply expressed common sense insofar as that consensus was held to cohere around opposition to the Jim Crow regime and practices of racial exclusion and subordination. Cox, in particular, saw those objectives as exhaustive of the basis of a distinctively black politics. However, the rhetoric of "the masses" was nonetheless an evasion of the thorny problem of crafting a popular politics in the here-and-now.

This imagery of the masses has been normalized in black political discourse over the last three decades, but its associations with ideological radicalism have dissipated. In this environment, and with erosion of the objective basis for the presumption of coherent racial aspiration on which the notion was grounded, its limitations become clearer than they could have been to Cox and his contemporaries. Despite its superficial evocations of potential agency in motion, "the masses" is the conceptual negation of a discourse of political mobilization. Some of Cox's formulations will seem mechanistic, especially to sensibilities honed in a time when capitalist power relations somehow seem more diffuse (despite their unprecedented global hegemony), prevailing social theoretical discourses seem more nuanced and less scientistic, and current political criticism focuses on categories of political identity other than those that emerge directly from the capitalist-labor relationship. Cox also displays a visceral, conventionally petit-bourgeois moralism in his perception that "social

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

instability" and "disreputable communal life" prevailed among poor black Americans. His views in this area may have been reinforced by the Chicago School's focus on social disorganization and pathology. In this way Cox stands out neither from his contemporaries nor from ostensibly leftist intellectuals today who imagine a degraded black "underclass" mired in pathology, "moral crisis," and "nihilism." ("The masses" and "the underclass" are, after all, two sides of the same coin: both representing monolithic, passive populations, though with different normative valuations.) However, I urge readers not to fixate on those occasional flaws, which in any case will probably often appear to be more egregious than they are, and to approach the text with an openness to the challenge that Oliver Cromwell Cox has bequeathed us: to think systematically about race as a category of social classification and hierarchy that emerged from and is a constitutive element of—not distinct from or alternative to—capitalist labor relations. This is the crucial entailment of the insight that race is a social construct and a prerequisite to the development of a genuinely transformative politics in the United States.

"Mass capitalistic control of books and periodicals, news gathering and distribution, radio, cinema, and television has made the throttling of democracy possible and the distortion of education and failure of justice widespread. It can only be countered by public knowledge of what this government by propaganda is accomplishing and how."

—W.E.B. Dubois, "Negroes and the Crisis of Capitalism in the United States," *Monthly Review*, April 1953

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Privatization and Urban Issues: A Global Perspective

by William K. Tabb

In my remarks today, I want to situate privatization generally, and its manifestations in the urban context specifically, in a global perspective. I am employing the phrase "global perspective" not in its common usage (to mean a comparison of national patterns of privatization) but rather in order to consider the phenomenon that has come to be known as globalization and the impact of this capacious analytic category on urban policy and governance issues—one of the most central of which is privatization.

I know you have been visiting urban revitalization projects—especially that cutting-edge American contribution, the business improvement district (BID), of which many city officials and real-estate people are so proud. For those of you who knew or knew of New York in the bad old days of filthy streets and street people, the current reduced numbers of visible homeless and reduced amounts of crime and litter are likely to be impressive. The city looks good, quite good indeed. For the more affluent, the city is a fine place and if one believes in trickle-down social policy, privatization has been a remarkable success.

Let me be clear that as a matter of personal consumption, I enjoy many of the fruits of privatization. I have occasion to visit

William Tabb is a frequent contributor to *Monthly Review.* He teaches economics at Queens College and political science at the Graduate Center at the City University of New York. His most recent books include *Reconsitituting Political Economy* (Routledge, 1999) and, *The Amoral Elephant* (Monthly Review Press, 2001.)

This talk was prepared for a meeting of the Planning Network's "Trading Places" conference at Columbia University, August 24, 2000.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wall Street, where the studio of our local community radio station is oddly located. I do last-minute preparations for my show in J. P. Morgan's atrium, where I sit in resplendent surroundings resembling a European cathedral, complete with vaulted ceilings, at a table by an indoor fountain and sip my cappuccino at a table provided by the management and subsidized by generous tax concessions by taxpayers. I work extensively at the research facilities of the New York Public Library, the one with the lions in front, which has recently been given a facelift by corporate sponsors, its shabby facilities refurbished handsomely. The park behind the library—once a haven for derelicts and drug dealers—has been transformed. It has a large staff picking up trash and rearranging the outdoor chairs and is policed in a low-key but effective way. The gardening staff is first-rate and the beautiful park attracts thousands of office workers from surrounding buildings where, on a sunny day, we all enjoy the lawn as we eat our lunches—perhaps purchased from one of the booths in the park. The surrounding buildings support the cost of maintaining the park. I suspect the higher rents they now receive make this a pretty good investment. For those with serious money there is a gorgeous restaurant in the park. In nice weather, its outdoor bar attracts a youthful crowd wearing clothes that cost more than most New Yorkers earn in a month or even in a year.

It is good for the city's economy that business improvement districts have gentrified a city in which the local government was unable to provide such services. The same corporations that demanded the lower taxes that starved the public sector have found a privatized way of paying for the services they want while avoiding paying for public schools, emergency rooms at the hospitals, shelters for the homeless, or subsidized housing for the working class.

I want to introduce some of these distributional issues by first looking at the globalization process and its impacts and then making a comparison to the restructuring that has accompanied globalization writ large with the transformation of urban spaces.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Globalization is often seen as the growing, and in some versions unprecedented, international integration of economic life. It is typically described in terms of the dramatic increase in trade and foreign direct investment relative to production, the surge in international financial transactions, and growth of global economic institutions such as multinational corporations and international organizations. There is general awareness that globalization is characterized by very different levels of global mobility, according to which elements of the economy are being referred to. That mobility is greater the more abstract and less human is the potential engine. Finance is the most global part of the world economy, while workers are the least.

There is, of course, this economic base to globalization, driven as it is by market forces and a new type of scale economies, which come from Internet access to arm's-length suppliers and customers, and to wider contracting alliances. The corresponding governance discussion has been about the norms and standards appropriate under the new circumstances, and the policies and institutions suitable to the more open political economy. However, when we raise a social justice perspective on the unfairness of such outcomes we are told that the market is just too efficient or simply just too powerful and therefore must dominate social and political outcomes. The point is really that the opportunities, costs, and benefits of globalization reflect capitalist relations.

Globalization has a material basis in technological change and is manifest in increased trade, investment, and financial flows but centrally it reflects enhanced corporate power and an accompanying ideological shift in favor of free markets, and the imposition of *laissez-faire* policies. The ideological shift that accompanies globalization, which is captured in the word neoliberalism, needs to be centrally understood in terms of the power shift in favor of corporate dominance. The discussion is not about what people deserve from their governments but about the transfer of power to private actors. In fact, an unexpectedly close synonym to contemporary globalization is *privatization.* It is this privatization that is being celebrated by the officials and urban entrepreneurs you are meeting with and that you have been brought together to learn to implement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It would be surprising if the same sort of downsizing of government and privatization that are at the heart of globalization as the expansion of capitalist social relations were not occurring at the level of our cities. Indeed, at the urban level something of the same conversation is going on. Making cities work better is discussed in a context of asserting that government cannot do the job, that markets can and that privatizing as much as possible is the answer. Omitted from such conversations are the incidence of benefits and the costs to working-class citizens in terms of the services they can expect for their tax dollars and the decreased power they have over public decisions on wages and working conditions. The public sector has not always done the job many of us would like but at least through the political process, social justice issues are a legitimate concern. In the market, it is one dollar, one vote. In societies with very unequal distributions of income and wealth, power accumulates in the hands of the relative few. Without a progressive role for government and public policy, the concerns of the few take precedence over the needs of the many. This is as true at the local level as at the global one.

In the new urban policy-making of privatization, it is assumed that what is good for real-estate and other business interests will be best for the rest of the city's residents. After all, protecting and enhancing the tax base and promoting job creation is the key to wider prosperity and an ability to pay for social programs. This is the same rationale that was offered for globalization's restructurings. Economic growth and greater efficiency will eventually be good for everyone and there is no alternative in any case. This conventional wisdom further suggests that efforts to help the poor and provide social services to the working class are simply too expensive and better done through privatization and the market. Government failure is prominent and the market can do better.

There is little awareness in such conversations that it was the market which created urban problems and government intervention came about as a result. This is the case not only in the sense that profits are privatized and social costs externalized onto the state but also in the sense that as capitalism grows and changes it transforms the built environment. The deterioration

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of our central cities was part of a long postindustrial transformation, just as their revitalization is a result of their new economic base in services—banking and communications, tourism and health services, legal and accounting, advertising and other business services. The detritus of the old industrial base and the abandoned victims of age, alcoholism, and drugs have been removed—out of sight now and so out of mind, no longer a concern for policy makers who, as in earlier eras of slum clearance and urban renewal, celebrate the physical revitalization of urban space.

The city's strategy had been to deny services for the poor by making it more and more difficult to obtain those services and redefining entitlements out of existence (except where forced by court challenges to begrudgingly, and to as limited an extent as they could get away with, restore benefits). In New York, this has consisted of forcing people who want to apply for entitlements to suffer long lines, endure repeated visits, and produce obscure documentation. The city even denies people food stamps, a federal program to feed the malnourished that is funded by the Federal government. By criminalizing poverty, closing public spaces, removing benches that people might sleep on, the city discouraged and harassed the poor.

It is not too much of a stretch to say that the fiscal crisis of the cities has been used in a manner similar to the leverage gained on debtor states experiencing financial crisis and balance of payments problems. The rescue is predicated on accepting the entry of foreign investors on favorable terms. National assets are privatized; local telephone and electric companies, for example, which lose money are sold to private investors. This raises money for the governments from the sale price and from the cessation of state subsidies. The new owners may improve service. They almost always raise prices, which forces the working class to reduce its consumption. The improved service which may result is distributed through the market to those who can afford to pay. The public sector does not make a profit because it is charged with delivering services to those who need them. The increased reliance on the private sector makes ability to pay the criteria for service. Cost savings can occur through private companies hiring

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lower-waged workers who do not receive the same benefit packages as public-sector workers.

If previously taxation was based on ability to pay, the poor are further impoverished. They must now buy a commodity where before they received a service, even if admittedly sometimes an unsatisfactory one, while the rich save because they no longer have to pay taxes to support the provision of public services for the masses. They buy only for their own requirements, thus allowing higher quality at lower cost since they pay only for their own consumption after privatization. This is why the affluent always oppose public provision of goods and services, preferring (for example) to pay to have their own garbage removed and offering the same option to the residents of low-income communities, which had received public services out of general tax revenues and now go without services they cannot afford. The reason garbage collection and fire protection were made public services is because disease and fire can spread to wealthy neighborhoods and so it was in the interests of everyone that service delivery was high enough to prevent contagion. Providing subsidized mass transit came to be a public function because private companies were caught in a cycle of rising costs, which was met by raising fares but which led to loss of ridership and bankruptcy. Employers gained from transportation subsidies that allowed them to pay lower wages to workers who must commuted.

Because globalization has increased the bargaining power of capital, the most mobile factor of production, labor—not so mobile—has been forced to bear more of the tax burden. Attracting and retaining mobile capital has required greater subsidies to business at the expense of labor. When advocates of privatization say that "BIDs work," they mean that when local governments grant the power to tax to wealthy subunits of a city, the organizations created can target provision of quality public service to the immediate area—services such as the removal of litter, the staffing of local guides to direct visitors, and provision of public amenities and their maintenance—at lower cost than if the corporate beneficiaries from such tightly targeted benefits had to contribute their share of taxes to provide amenities to all neighborhoods in the city.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is the resurgence of the downtowns of global cities a bad thing? Not necessarily. But let us understand that local elites prefer privatization for these reasons, and let us not confuse their class-based criteria for those that would prevail in a democratic society premised on inclusion and equity. Privatization, BIDs in particular, allow a reoccupation of public space by affluent users. While, in the better instances, some social services have been provided, there has been little or no monitoring and we simply do not know where the poor have gone. Poverty, drug addiction, and homelessness are unlikely to have disappeared but they are largely invisible in the downtown areas. The longest economic expansion in our economy's history has been the major factor in the change. It remains to be seen what will happen when a downturn comes.

In the best of times, the United States does not address unmet needs for housing, education, and healthcare. It accepts city government's efforts, such as BIDs, to help the corporate sector secede from the local communities in which it does business. What will happen when the business cycle turns? We will surely be told then that because of the fiscal crisis it is not the time to address social justice concerns. Yet now, in the supposed best of times, those who raise these issues (even if merely to win some working class votes in an election) are accused of waging class warfare.

If public services are inefficient, we should ask why this is the case and what can be done. But this is not an excuse for expecting redistributionally-based services to the less affluent to pay for themselves. The market test is an inappropriate one. Where privatization has occurred, regulation needs to accompany grants of monopoly privilege to for-profit providers and workers and the public must be protected. Progressive city planners forced to work within a framework of privatization can raise questions about what taxpayers get in return for subsidies. They can insist on recapturing subsidies when promises of job creation and public amenities do not materialize. They can insist that cities comply with agreements made and that cities not give away the store. The magnitude of real costs and benefits and their incidence need to be carefully studied.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is work for progressive urbanists in making these relationships clear and in advocating for those who resist the depredations of capital in urban space. The defense of the social and a renewed focus on the needs of people over profit are always central tasks. The bottom line however, in the phrase so overused by the privatizers, is that we should be talking not about greater market efficiency in an irrational system, but a different system. Not one in which the people are always on the defense—trying to protect themselves from further inroads of the profit logic, upward redistributions in land use, and appropriation of public resources by the powerful—but the creation of a society in which people's needs come first and the hold of class oppression is broken. But that very necessary discussion is not on the agenda of those who have financed this gathering, so you will have to excuse me for mentioning it.

"Historically, the lesson of Seattle—if we don't freeze it as a fetish and reduce it to repetitive demonstrations—is even more important. With the Americans taking the lead in the struggle against the world seen as merchandise, we are reminded that globalization is not the only form internationalism can take. What is at stake, it is now clear, is neither the imposition of the U.S. model on Europe nor the defense of Europe's welfare state. It is our common struggle—from below and on a worldwide scale—against a capitalist system both triumphant and in deep crisis. Amid the present confusion, we may actually be watching the early phase of a new historical period."

—Daniel Singer, "Europe: Is There a Fourth Way?" *The Nation,* November 6, 2000

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Market Failures in US Medicine

by W. T. Whitney Jr.

Business interests increasingly call the shots in medical education and research. Such a trend is surprising, because medical education and research are costly, offer delayed results, and, ideally, benefit all—hardly, it would seem, the venue for profiteering.

An editorial in the May 13, 2000 issue of the *Lancet*, a British medical journal, reports on the emerging crisis in medical education.

> Over the past decade academic medical centers in the USA have been struggling to adapt to an increasingly competitive, market driven health care system. To cut costs they have reduced staff and streamlined operations. It now seems that some of the country's 125 academic medical centers are destined to go out of business...others whilst surviving, are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfill their traditional missions of training young doctors, nurses, and other health workers, conducting basic and clinical research, and providing care to the patient.

The writer attributes this situation to high costs, the realities of managed care, and reduced support from the US Government—the latter a result of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. Hospital care in university centers is usually expensive because patients there tend to be poor and have illnesses that are expensive to treat, due in part to delayed access to care. Faculty teaching time has been reduced, professors and researchers have moved into the private sector, and patient care experience for students has been cut, mainly because of early hospital discharges due to cost control measures. In some centers, the quality of education and care is already marginal, according to the *Lancet* editorial.

W.T. Whitney Jr. taught pediatrics in Mississippi, practiced pediatrics in New Hampshire and, for the past twenty-four years, in rural Maine. He is a member of Let Cuba Live of Maine, a Cuba solidarity organization, and of the Labor Party.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A *New England Journal of Medicine* editorial on May 18, 2000, notes changes in the conduct of medical research. The writer, Marcia Angell, M.D., comments on two articles that appeared in the same issue of the magazine. In one, a study on depression, the usual listings of the authors' ties to drug companies were so extensive that they had to be left out because of space considerations. The other article looked at problems associated with the shift of drug research from universities to private companies. Reluctance to release unfavorable data was noted, as was hesitancy to publish negative results and manipulation of drug trials so as to favor the products of private companies. The manufacturers were accused of using professional medical writers to ghostwrite scientific articles and of listing prestigious scientists as authors of studies in which they had no involvement.

Angell condemns the rise of partnership arrangements between pharmaceutical companies and academic centers. Many academicians have shifted research work to private companies, who in turn have made large payments to financially strapped universities. The companies gain the prestige of academic affiliation plus the ability to design and administer their own research projects. Angell notes:

> The ties between clinical researchers and industry include not only grant support, but also a host of other financial arrangements. Researchers serve as consultants to companies whose products they are studying, join advisory boards and speakers bureaus, enter into patent and royalty arrangements...promote drugs and devices at company sponsored symposiums, and allow themselves to be plied with expensive gifts and trips to luxurious settings. Many also have equity interest in the company.

Angell reports that drug companies provide free meals and gifts to doctors in training. They attend lavish social events disguised as educational presentations. She continues:

> When the boundaries between industry and academic medicine become as blurred as they are now, the business goals of industry influence the mission of the medical schools in multiple ways. In terms of education, medical students and house officers, under the constant tutelage of industry representatives, learn to rely on drugs and devices more than they probably should...young physicians learn that for every problem there is a pill (and a drug company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> representative to explain it)....The academic medical centers, in allowing themselves to become research outposts for industry, contribute to the overemphasis on drugs and devices. Finally, there is the issue of conflicts of commitment. Faculty members who do extensive work for industry may be distracted from their commitment to the school's educational mission.

The public health impact of the commercialization of education and research is still unknown. If market forces affect education and research the way they have influenced healthcare itself, then the prognosis is grim.

From the point of view of both fairness and effectiveness, healthcare, US style, has to be seen as a disaster. Access is severely limited; forty-four million US citizens—16 percent of the population—have no health insurance. Millions more have inadequate coverage. Statistical indicators of health outcome give the United States low rankings compared to other industrialized countries, specifically thirty-seventh place among 191 other health systems in a World Health Organization survey released on June 20, 2000. African-Americans, Latinos, and poor people in general are sicker, more vulnerable to serious accidents, and die earlier than the rest of the population. The life expectancy of black males is ten years less than that of white males. The 1997 infant mortality rate for African-American babies was 14.2 deaths per thousand babies in their first year of life; the rate for white babies was 6.0 deaths per thousand.

Nor is exorbitant spending for healthcare a secret. Paying out $4,000 per capita annually, far more than next place Switzerland at $2,500 per capita, the United States is by far the world's champion healthcare spendthrift. Outlay for health care has risen from 7.1 percent of the GNP in 1970 to 13.5 percent in 1997; the cost for Canada is 9 percent. Physicians are well paid—even too well paid—hospital care is expensive, the manufacture and sale of drugs and equipment are profitable enterprises, and costly technology has spread throughout the system. Profit inflates administrative costs; the operation of private insurance plans and managed care companies consumes from 20 to 35 percent of the healthcare dollar, while the costs of operating the nonprofit Medicaid and Medicare programs remain at 2 to 4 percent. There

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is too much money in the system, and it has pooled in the wrong places.

On May 6, 2000, for example, Maine newspapers reported on the terms of the then-imminent sale of nonprofit Maine Blue Cross/Blue Shield to Anthem Company of Indiana, a private company. According to the report, board chairman W. J. Ryan, a banker, indicated that eleven Blue Cross/Blue Shield executives would be well taken care of if they happened to be fired by the new owner. The president would receive 1.4 million dollars, and the six vice-presidents, 609 thousand dollars each. Ryan stated that "these are hard working people who are just going to get severance if they lose their jobs." The president, he said, was a young man with a family to support.

Effective action is needed to bring about basic change in the practice, structure, and ethos of US healthcare. Outrage alone will not work, nor will reliance upon rational arguments appealing to fairness and justice. An approach that focuses on healthcare reform alone seems now to have been a dead-end strategy. Single-issue activists, loyal to their own separate causes, are vulnerable to the weapon of divide-and-rule. The movement for change in US healthcare has yet to evolve into an action-oriented, broad-based coalition.

Based on commercial and entrepreneurial foundations, the US healthcare system long ago became a basic industry. The status quo is defended by powerful institutions, by those who have become wealthy through healthcare, and by millions who depend upon work in the health sector for their livelihood. For physician and author Vicente Navarro, the crucial consideration in thinking about change is power.

> It is because of the weakness of the working class....The United States is the only capitalist country without some form of national health program and also the only one without a mass-based socialist party. The possibility of establishing a national health program depends on the possibility of strengthening the labor movement. (*Dangerous to Your Health: Capitalism in Health Care,* Monthly Review Press, 1993, 98.)

Agitation and action based upon healthcare reform undoubtedly contributes to consciousness-raising. The notion of funda-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mental change in US healthcare, however, will remain a dream until the cause is taken up by a broad-based, working-people's party. Healthcare activists need to join with friends involved with other single issues and build such a party. They need to fashion this essential tool in order to complete many unfinished tasks, among them the project of universal healthcare.

Common Sense

"As a matter of statistics or common sense, prosperity does not breed poverty."

—Stephen Kagann, the chief economist to New York Governor George E. Pataki, *New York Times*, October 6, 2000.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Remembering Daniel Singer

by Percy Brazil

My friend Daniel Singer, in a piece he wrote for *The Nation* six years ago, said that he often felt like a deserter from the army of the dead because he escaped the Nazi roundup of Jews in Paris by walking across France to Switzerland.

Daniel cheated death again five years ago when he was hit with a life-threatening illness. But this time the Parisian medical profession came to his rescue and he was cured and able to resume his busy life as a journalist, author, radio commentator, and lecturer.

Daniel's luck and the old millennium ran out together; in December 2000 he died after a year-long battle with cancer. We are going to have to find our way in the new millennium without him, although he did leave his last book as a sort of *vade mecum* to help us at least head in the right direction. Fittingly, its title is *Whose Millennium? Theirs or Ours?*

Daniel was born in 1926 in the Warsaw ghetto. His father, Bernard Singer, was a poet, a journalist, and poor. His mother, Esther (affectionately known as Eschuchia), was the pride and joy of traditional and wealthy Jewish parents who were dead set against her marriage to Bernard. He was, after all, a dreamer, a scribbler. By what means short of divine intervention would he ever earn enough *zlotys* to support their daughter? But marry they did. Asked years later if Esther had come with a dowry, Bernard laughed. "Dowry? That's what they offered me if I'd go away."

Daniel was born at home, as was the custom. Upstairs in the same apartment house lived another young poet, Isaac Deutscher. Daniel liked to say he'd been close to Deutscher from the day he was born until the day Deutscher died. Indeed,

Percy Brazil was a longtime friend of Daniel Singer, as well as his personal physician.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Deutscher was like a father to Daniel and it was Daniel who delivered the eulogy at Deutscher's funeral in London.

Eschuchia was the intellectual of the Singer family. She was serious in her convictions, deeply philosophical, and cherished the unforgettable experience of having heard Rosa Luxemburg speak. While still at university, she became a Marxist. Bernard was more of a romantic. István Mészáros has said that Bernard Singer's writing was like a nightingale singing and that Daniel's ability to present complicated ideas with grace and coherence was the combined influence of both parents. It was Eschuchia who urged Deutscher to read Marx. He did and went on to become one of the leading Marxist historians and scholars of the twentieth century. So the Marxist triple play was Eschuchia to Isaac to Daniel.

In time, Bernard's scribblings defied prediction by bringing in enough money to permit him to move his family out of the ghetto. Eschuchia was able to give up teaching to stay home and raise and educate her children who, by this time, numbered three. Daniel was the only Jewish boy in his class at school and, despite the fact that antisemitism was a way of life in Poland, he was popular, albeit in the condescending manner of, "We don't like Jews, but you're different." (And, as the joke used to go, especially in the bathroom.)

When he was twelve, Daniel developed a severe form of sinusitis. By now Bernard could afford to send his son to a warm climate for his health. Eschuchia packed up Daniel and his sister and headed for Antibes in the south of France. It was the summer of 1939.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed on August 24 of that year. Deutscher hurried to Antibes to tell the Singers war was coming, they mustn't return to Poland but instead should try to get to England. Eschuchia hoped to book passage on one of several Polish ships docked in Marseilles. When two of the ships were sunk by the Germans, the Singers decided the prudent thing to do was head for Paris where they might be able to arrange a Channel crossing to England. Daniel sold his stamp collection so they'd have money for a place to live. Soon after the arrival of German troops in Paris, the police came for the Singers. Daniel's sister jumped from a window and broke both legs. Esther was allowed to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

take her daughter to a hospital and it was then decided that Daniel should try to escape to Switzerland. With another Polish lad, he walked and hitchhiked some four hundred miles across France, slipped past German border patrols, and made his way to Geneva. Swiss authorities at first put him in a concentration camp but then released him into the custody of the Polish consul in Berne. He enrolled in school. Two years later, he was able to pass the baccalaureate exam in French. He studied philosophy at the university in Geneva where he was eventually joined by his mother and sister.

With the war drawing to a close in 1944, Daniel, his mother, and sister were able to leave for London where they joined Bernard. Arrested in Riga as an undesirable writer in 1940, Bernard had been held for two years in an icy Soviet gulag before being permitted to travel to London. Daniel told me he'd been saved from going through a Stalinist phase in his political development because of the thuggery and *dacoitage* of both the Soviet and Polish Communist parties. The Soviets jailed his father and the Polish party expelled Deutscher for daring to think independently. Daniel had nothing but contempt for the Georgian seminarian and his coterie. I can also add here that Daniel never belonged to any political party. In England he entered the University of London to continue his studies in political science and economics. He graduated with a B.Sc. in economics. Deutscher, too, was in London, building his reputation with articles for the *Economist* and the *Observer.* In 1949, Daniel began writing on politics and economics for the *New Statesman.* His work brought him to the attention of the *Economist,* where he remained on staff for nineteen years.

Jeanne Kerel worked for the National Center of Scientific Research in Paris and was at the London School of Economics writing her doctoral thesis on "The Cost of Living in Paris 1840–1954" when she met a young man who not only had brains and charm but, more to the point, spoke fluent French. She and Daniel married in 1956 with Isaac Deutscher serving as best man. Jeanne received her Ph.D. in economics the following year. In 1958 the young couple settled in Paris where, as Daniel's reputa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion grew, their home became a haven for visitors from around the world. The Singers were intellectual partners and made a formidable team. She was a critical participant in his work and traveled with him wherever his investigations and speaking engagements took him. At the same time, she continued her own studies in preparation for publication of a major study in economics. They had a marvelous, loving marriage for forty-four years.

While Jeanne continued her work at the National Center, Daniel reported on Gaullist France for the *Economist* and provided radio and television commentary for the national networks in Britain and Canada. When Cable News Network (CNN) tried repeatedly to interview him, he finally told them, "Look, I'm a professional journalist. This is how I make a living." He was saying that if they wanted to hear what he had to say, they had to hire him. It sometimes takes a socialist to remind the capitalists how the game is played.

It was during this time that he developed a healthy scepticism regarding the objectivity of the British press, as best exemplified by his favorite ditty:

> There is no way to bribe or twist
> Thank God, an honest English journalist
> But if you knew what he can do
> Unbribed: there's no occasion to.

A defining moment, perhaps a watershed in Daniel's life, was the French student-worker revolt of May 1968. Daniel covered it as a journalist and was so moved by the experience that he took six months off from the *Economist* to write what became the authoritative book on the events of that period. The book was *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968.* He offered it to the *Economist* for publication, but obviously it was not their cup of tea. It was snapped up in the United States by Hill and Wang and published in 1970. The *New Republic* reviewer wrote at the time, "If Marx had been living in Paris during May 1968, he might have written this book." Daniel was now firmly established as a major political writer.

The Road to Gdansk, a book about the Polish uprising in 1980 that produced *Solidarnosc*, was published by Monthly Review Press in 1981. Daniel had a deep attachment to this democratic and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exciting moment in the land of his birth and was saddened but not surprised when its revolutionary fervor was undercut and then betrayed. This book also included a prescient analysis of the "seeds of change" in the Soviet Union.

Also in 1981, Daniel was invited to become European correspondent for the *Nation*. He dictated his final column for the magazine from his hospital bed a few days before he died.

1988 brought the publication of *Is Socialism Doomed? The Meaning of Mitterand*, once again about the betrayal of a socialist movement, this time in France.

Daniel's last book, his magnum opus, was *Whose Millennium? Theirs or Ours?*, published by Monthly Review Press in 1999. In it Daniel refutes those who believe that There Is No Alternative to capitalism. (He always referred to this idea by its acronym, TINA.) This masterful work not only proclaims that there is indeed an alternative but raises the development of that alternative to the level of an imperative.

Additionally, Daniel was a standout in the lineup of heavy hitters at the annual Socialist Scholars Conference in New York for many years and during the eighties and nineties, he contributed articles to *Monthly Review* and lectured at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

It is customary when examining the life of a writer to break it into five parts: Childhood and Education; Embarking on a Career; Early Work; In Full Flower as an Established Writer; and, finally, Loss of Illusions. I have described the first four of these segments. As for loss of illusions, Daniel never had any. He never believed that the Stalinist endeavor was a socialist paradigm. "More like Paradigm Lost," he quipped, ever the Restoration scholar.

Although Daniel did not think the May 1968 events in France would have any immediate effect, he insisted upon their longterm significance. "Internationalist, egalatarianist, spontaneous and libertarian," he wrote, "the May Movement suddenly recalled what socialism once stood for and showed what it could mean again in our times. It accomplished next to nothing, yet it holds a promise for the future." He felt and wrote similarly about the betrayal of *Solidarnosc*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Daniel further insisted that socialism hasn't failed, because it has never been tried. He identified himself with the stream of socialism represented by Rosa Luxemburg. As noted earlier, he was never a member of any political party, but when Staughton Lynd mused at the 1999 Socialist Scholars Conference about starting a Marxist-Luxemburgist party, Daniel swiftly said, "I'll join." That was very likely as close as he ever came to signing up.

My wife Gladys and I spent the last two weeks of November 2000 in Paris in order to visit with Daniel and Jeanne each day during his final hospitalization. Daniel knew his life was ending. He was quite lucid and eager to talk and be talked to. He spoke, for instance, of his regret that some people have an almost mystical belief in inevitability. "It's true," he said, "that capitalism has within it the seeds of its own destruction, but only seeds in the sense of awareness and consciousness. Capitalism will have to be pushed off the stage." He went on to say that

> it will require a revolution. But not a revolution that necessarily requires bloodshed. Rather a revolution in the consciousness of people. And that will take time. And when that time comes, let's hope they get it right. But there is no guarantee. Rosa Luxemburg predicted socialism or barbarism. I happen to be a socialist, but if a better idea is produced, so be it. I would not want to foreclose on the future.

And he added,

> There is no certainty about the future. Humanity has the capability of destroying itself, and it may very well do so. The hope is with the younger generation. They will not be able to run away from the problems of the world the way our generation did and the next generation has. But our grandchildren will have to deal with the contradictions.

In *Whose Millennium?*, he wrote, "On the ground littered with broken models and shattered expectations, a new generation will now have to take the lead." And additionally he wrote, "Egalitarianism—not to be enforced with levelling and uniformity—must be at the very heart of any progressive project."

Michael Löwy said at the time of Daniel's death,

> Daniel Singer was more than a journalist. He was at the same time a historian, writer, political essayist, and he distinguished himself

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> with his verve, caustic spirit, mordant irony, and an obstinate fidelity to the socialist dream.

Daniel's close friend István Mészáros summed up Daniel's character and life:

> Daniel had a rare gift for relating to people and carrying them with his logic and passion. He was able to live in a world that is basically hostile to his ideas and yet hold strongly on to his beliefs. He could convince not only with the way he wrote, but could convince people also by touching them with the way of his life and the style of his life.

István added,

> Daniel had a marvelous sense of proportion which could put even the most disheartening events in historical perspective. That is why, notwithstanding the critical distance which he always maintained from the Stalinist developments in Russia and elsewhere, including his native country, the adversaries of socialism could never receive even one word of comfort, nor derive one gram of ammunition for their cold war efforts from his books and numerous other writings.

Daniel was an exemplar of the aphorism that the essence of life lies not in the defeat of our dreams, but in the joy that they were ever there at all. With virtually his last breath, he envisaged a socialist future for humanity.

He loved to end his public lectures with the words spoken by Rosa Luxemburg the day before she was murdered, and I think it fitting to end now with them.

> Your order is built on sand. The revolution will raise its heart again, proclaiming to the sound of trumpets, I was, I am, I shall be.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DANIEL SINGER MILLENIUM PRIZE

The Daniel Singer Millenium Prize Foundation, Inc., is being established to further expand on the ideas explored by Daniel Singer in his last book *Whose Millenium? Theirs or Ours?*

The purpose of the educational foundation is to encourage and develop ideas which enhance and extend democratic, civil and economic rights, and social justice, to all the peoples of the world.

A prize of $2,500 will be awarded annually for an essay of not more than five thousand words, submitted to the Foundation, which continues Daniel's examination of the development of the new millenium. The Foundation will be established as a endowment to fund the annual $2,500 prize.

Scholars/activists will compete in an annual essay contest, with the winner selected by a committee composed of distinguished writers on both sides of the Atlantic. The committee will select the essay which best explores and augments the Singer thesis. The winner will then deliver a public lecture based upon the winning essay.

The award will be announced annually in the month of December. Daniel Singer died on December 2, 2000.

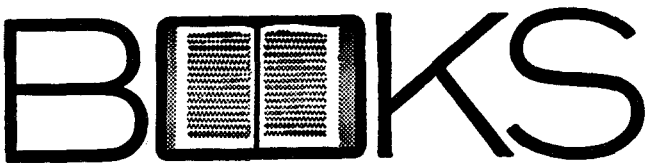
Application is being made to establish the Foundation as a 501 c3 Charity to accept donations and appreciated securities.

Financial contributions both small and large will be welcomed by the Foundation. Contributions should be made out to THE DANIEL SINGER MILLENIUM PRIZE FOUNDATION, INC., and can be sent to the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Albert Ruben, at 285 Central Park West, Apt. 6W, New York, NY 10024.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Percy Brazil, Chairperson, Connecticut
Adrian DeWind, Secretary, New York
Albert Ruben, Treasurer, New York
Frank Fried, California
Maurice Lazarus, Massachusetts
Jeanne Singer, France

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



About the Workers and For the Workers

by Michael D. Yates

Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling, *The Working Class Movement in America*, edited by Paul Le Blanc (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000), $55, 231 pp.; Paul Le Blanc, *A Short History of the US Working Class* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1999), $30 (cloth), $20(paper), 205 pp.

1886 was a momentous year in United States labor history. The great eight-hours movement had swept across the nation, and the Knights of Labor were in full flower. Working class politicial parties were forming, and the American Federation of Labor had been founded. In that year, Karl Marx's daughter, Eleanor, and her partner, Edward Aveling, toured the United States, giving lectures and meeting comrades as guests of the Socialist Labor Party. They then returned to England and wrote about their trip. The first book under review is a timely reprint of the original. In addition to the reprint, it includes a useful introduction by Paul Le Blanc (including a fine annotated labor history bibliography) and interesting essays by historian Lisa Frank on Eleanor Marx and by writer and labor activist Kim Moody on aspects of working class life the two visitors failed to see.

Marx and Aveling were remarkably optimistic about the prospects for radicalism among US workers. No doubt, the

Michael D. Yates has been closely associated with *Monthly Review* for many years and is the author of *Why Unions Matter* (Monthly Review Press, 1998.) He thanks Victor Wallis for helpful comments.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remarkable events of the time would have led any sympathetic observer to be similarly hopeful. As they take pains to show, through careful reading of various government reports, from which they quote copiously and effectively, workers were terribly exploited and class polarization was on the rise. In a manner reminiscent of the famous chapter on "The Working Day" in *Capital*, they describe the abysmally low wages, soul-destroying hours, horrific working conditions, unsanitary and unsafe housing, and the awful circumstances of working women and children. Yet, working people were rapidly becoming conscious of their class position and organizing to improve their lives and even abolish the wage system. Workers and their allies had begun hundreds of labor newspapers and journals, formed unions, built and joined labor political parties, and constructed cooperatives. Labor was on the move, and Marx and Aveling foresaw a bright future. They were impressed with the freshness and militance of the US working class. Even the cowboy they interviewed described his life and work in class conscious terms, completely debunking the myth of the romantic Wild West.

With more than one hundred years of hindsight, we can see that optimism was not completely warranted in 1886. As Le Blanc and Moody point out in their companion essays, The Knights of Labor did not deserve as negative nor the AFL as positive an evaluation as Marx and Aveling gave them. The Knights, for example, embraced black workers, while the AFL mired itself in racism from the beginning. Moody notes that Marx and Aveling show limited understanding of the debilitating effects of racism on the labor movement and the constant immigration that continually divided and disorganized the working class. They also failed to grasp the trajectory of capital as it systematically destroyed craft work and degraded labor through the theory and tactics of Taylorism.

Marx and Aveling bring to life some of the country's working class heroes, notably Captain William Black, Civil War fighter and lawyer for the Haymarket martyrs. Black and many others are now forgotten, as are, in fact, most of the momentous events of the period. And this fact of forgetting our past, or better, never

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

knowing it in the first place, is something that struck me as I read this book. It seems that every progressive social movement in the United States must pretty much start from scratch because there is so little collective memory.

This is probably due to the demise of working class culture in the mass consumer society that developed in the decades after the Second World War. This development was not entirely fortuitous. The intentional destruction of the left wing of the labor movement played a critical role. A vital left culture, including an understanding and memorialization of the struggles of the past, helps to create a collective memory essential to any movement. When the right succeeds in defeating the left, it not only destroys human beings, it dismantles the organizations (for example, newspapers and magazines, social clubs, summer camps, and athletic teams) essential to the maintenance of that memory. Then, when circumstances once again favor the organization of the working class, new movements have to recreate what previous generations had already done.

Can anything be done to keep history alive? One thing radicals can do is write articles and books for working people. Millions of words are written about workers, but not many are written for them, that is, written in a style and with a passion attractive to the rank-and-file. One reason for this is that most of the scholars of the working class are not themselves engaged with workers—as teachers, as organizers, even as neighbors. Progressive academics often do not think of themselves as workers, despite the continuing transformation of their schools into ordinary workplaces. Some radical professors at Yale were actually opposed to the unionization of their own graduate students. All of this means that what they write is too much aimed at other academics rather than the people who must be the agents of radical social transformation.

One hopeful sign is the growing number of radical scholars who, themselves, come from the working class. Paul Le Blanc is one such person. Paul grew up in a working class family in a working class community, and he has sought through his political work and his scholarship to connect with workers, to think of himself as a worker, and to write for workers. He has achieved a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fine success in his new book, *A Short History of the US Working Class.* In just 133 pages of narrative, it has thoroughly distilled more than three hundred years of US labor history and one hundred years of labor history scholarship, and done it in a manner and style that will engage the workers who actually make the history. Le Blanc takes us on a compelling and exciting whirlwind tour of labor unions and workers' movements in the United States: the European conquest and theft of native lands, slavery and its class-dividing legacy, revolution against British colonialism, the birth of the working class, the Civil War or second American revolution, the industrial revolution, labor revolts, the American Federation of Labor, the formation of radical labor organizations and political parties (the IWW, the Socialist Party, various communist parties), the Great Depression and the CIO, the Second World War and its conservative effects upon the labor movement, the Cold War and the destruction of labor's left wing, postwar prosperity, economic stagnation, the civil rights and women's movements, and recent attempts to reorganize and rebuild the labor movement.

The key theme of Le Blanc's book is that the working class majority makes our history. Workers erect our buildings, grow our food, build our roads, mine our coal, teach our children, heal our sick, and in doing so create our society. Modern history, then, must begin with the workers. If we begin with workers, we see right away that it is their struggle for a better world that generates social change. What would our sacred notions of freedom and democracy mean, for example, without the arduous and often dangerous efforts of ordinary working men and women? Would we have had a second American revolution and a civil rights movement without the struggle of slaves and then of black laborers? Would we have had unions and all of the good things they bring without the heroism of workers? Workers have, of course, often been divided in many ways, but when they have managed to overcome these divisions, our society has come closest to realizing the ideals political leaders always talk about but seldom defend.

Like Marx and Aveling, Le Blanc displays a radical optimism throughout his book, despite his knowledge that the US labor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

movement has had far more failures than successes. He does not shirk from an examination of labor's many defeats, some of which were self-inflicted, in order to find out what we might learn from them to build a stronger movement in the future. He finds that successes often could not be sustained because of the unwillingness of white workers to support people of color and men to show common cause with women, as well as the willingness of labor's leaders to wage war on working class radicals, typically the very people who were trying to build a radically democratic and "rainbow" labor movement. He suggests that only such a movement can challenge what now seems to be the unassailable power of capital.

Today's labor movement, despite recent positive changes, is far-removed from the one Paul Le Blanc hopes for; it is still clotted with an entrenched, undemocratic, and occasionally corrupt bureaucracy. The author is hopeful that the new leaders in the AFL-CIO, pushed and prodded by the ranks below, will at least open up enough space for the rest of us to forge a "Third American Revolution," an upheaval aimed at "ending the power of wealthy corporations and consolidating a radically democratic social order." Perhaps the protests against the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund are the opening salvos in a renewed class war.

In addition to his compact text, the author has included five valuable resources for his readers: an excellent bibliographic essay, including works of fiction, art, and photography; an extensive annotated listing of films and videos (some of which are referred to in the text); a useful glossary of terms; a time line of US history; and a chronology of US labor history.

Paul Le Blanc is what might be called an "organic labor intellectual." Labor historian and theoretician of the labor movement, Selig Perlman, condemned the role of intellectuals in the US labor movement. They were outsiders, guilty of leading workers astray in pursuit of utopian (that is, communist) visions. Perlman did not believe that people from the working class who became intellectuals would be taken in by the likes of Marx and Engels. Labor's real, "home-grown" or "organic" intellectuals, were pragmatic, accepting of capitalism and content to win for workers as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much as they could gain within its framework. But Perlman was profoundly wrong. Le Blanc and many others before him were "home-grown," but they were radical too. And, in alliance with radical "outsiders," they were critical to the building of the labor movement. The truth is that the heart of every labor movement beats with a radical pulse, and while the pragmatists (like John L. Lewis or the young Samuel Gompers) sometimes achieved much, they almost always did so in periods of radical ferment. Organic working-class radicals like Peter McGuire, Eugene Debs, Bill Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Leo Huberman, and A. Philip Randolph helped push the US labor movement to the left, and it was this that allowed the pragmatists to be successful. It is from the lives and works of such radicals that workers can come to know who they are and what they must do. Paul Le Blanc's book is a good teacher; it is our duty to see to it that the right students read it.

Fifty Years Ago in MONTHLY REVIEW

"This phenomenon is not new. We meet it over and over again, in Vietnam, the Gold Coast, and Batavia; in the pages of Forster's *A Passage to India* and in Frazier's study of Harlem in *The Negro in the United States.* Culture contact under conditions of modern, imperialist conquest and domination has among its many tragic consequences a most virulent one: the depreciation in the eyes of the conquered peoples of their own traditions and accomplishments, their own songs and great men, and the acceptance—even if sometimes subconscious—of the conqueror's standards and values. This is encouraged by the dangling before the 'native' of the civilizing rewards to accompany the acceptance of alien standards, but it is not a real offer to share in these rewards on anything approaching equal opportunity. The consequent self-deprecation is tragic—it can lead only to destructive feelings of inferiority and concomitant feelings of aggression, chauvinism, and bitterness."

—A Special Correspondent, "Puerto Rico: The Necessity for Socialism," *Monthly Review*, February 1951, 452-53.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Find Monthly Review in *BETTER BOOKSTORES*

CALIFORNIA

BLUE DOOR
3823 5th Ave.
San Diego
619-298-8610

CITY LIGHTS
261 Columbus Ave.
San Francisco
415-362-8193

CODY'S BOOKS
2454 Telegraph Ave.
Berkeley
510-845-7852

MIDNIGHT SPECIAL
1318 3rd St. Promenade
Santa Monica
310-393-2923

MODERN TIMES
888 Valencia Street
San Francisco
415-282-9246

COLORADO

TATTERED COVER
2955 East First Ave.
Denver
303-322-7727

IDAHO

BOOKPEOPLE
512 South Main
Moscow,
208-882-7957

IOWA

PRAIRIE LIGHTS
15 South Dubuque St.
Iowa City
800-295-BOOK

ILLINOIS

SEMINARY CO-OP
5757 South University Ave.
Chicago
773-752-4381

MASSACHUSETTS

BROADSIDE BOOKSHOP
247 Main St.
Northampton
413-586-4235

HARVARD BOOKSTORE
1256 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge
617-661-1515

MICHIGAN

PAPERBACKS UNLIMITED
22634 Woodward Ave.
Ferndale
248-546-3282

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MINNESOTA

HUNGRY MIND
1648 Grand Ave.
St. Paul
612-699-0587

NEW YORK

COLISEUM BOOKS
1771 Broadway
New York
212-757-8381

LABYRINTH BOOKS
536 West 112th St.
New York
212-865-1588

PAPYRUS BOOKS
2915 Broadway
New York
212-222-3350

ST. MARK'S BOOKSHOP
31 Third Ave.
New York
212-260-7853

TALKING LEAVES BOOKS
3158 Main St.
Buffalo
716-837-8554

REVOLUTION BOOKS
9 West 19th St.
New York
212-691-3345

NORTH CAROLINA

INTERNATIONALIST BOOKS
405 West Franklin
Chapel Hill
919-942-1740

ONTARIO, CANADA

MAGS AND FAGS
254 Elgin St.
Ottawa
613-233-9651

PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE OF OUR OWN
3920 Spruce St.
Philadelphia
215-222-1576

WASHINGTON

LEFT BANK BOOKS
92 Pike St.
Seattle
206-622-0195

ELLIOT BAY BOOKS
101 South Main St.
Seattle
206-624-6600

WISCONSIN

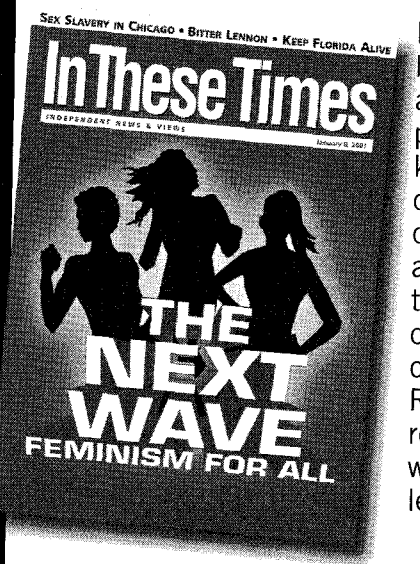
RAINBOW BOOK CO-OP
426 West Gillman St.
Madison
608-257-6050

To list your better bookstore contact Claude Misukiewicz at <mrmag@monthly review.org>.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEVER NEEDED MORE THAN IT IS TODAY.

—NOAM CHOMSKY


Sex Slavery in Chicago • Bitter Lennon • Keep Florida Alive
In These Times
Independent News & Views
THE NEXT WAVE
FEMINISM FOR ALL

In These Times is a rare beacon of truth-telling amid that swamp of political propaganda known as the media. It delivers the hard news one might expect from a free press. It explains the subtext for the continuing scandal of our decayed democracy. Read it—you will be regularly shocked by what the other journals leave out.

—**William Greider**

THE MOST CREATIVE AND CHALLENGING NEWS MAGAZINE ON THE AMERICAN LEFT.

—CORNEL WEST

For the past 23 years, **In These Times** has been the premier news magazine on the left, covering foreign policy, the environment and labor. We've won numerous awards from Project Censored, including first place in 1997 and 1998 for the most under-reported stories of the year. Start your subscription today and find out what you've been missing.

Become an **In These Times** subscriber today!

Right now a 1-year, 26-issue subscription is only

$19.95

That's $17 off the regular subscription price!

call **1 (800) 827-0270**
for credit card orders

or write to
In These Times, P.O. Box 1912, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-9885
include check or credit card number

Mention code AMR01 to get this great deal!

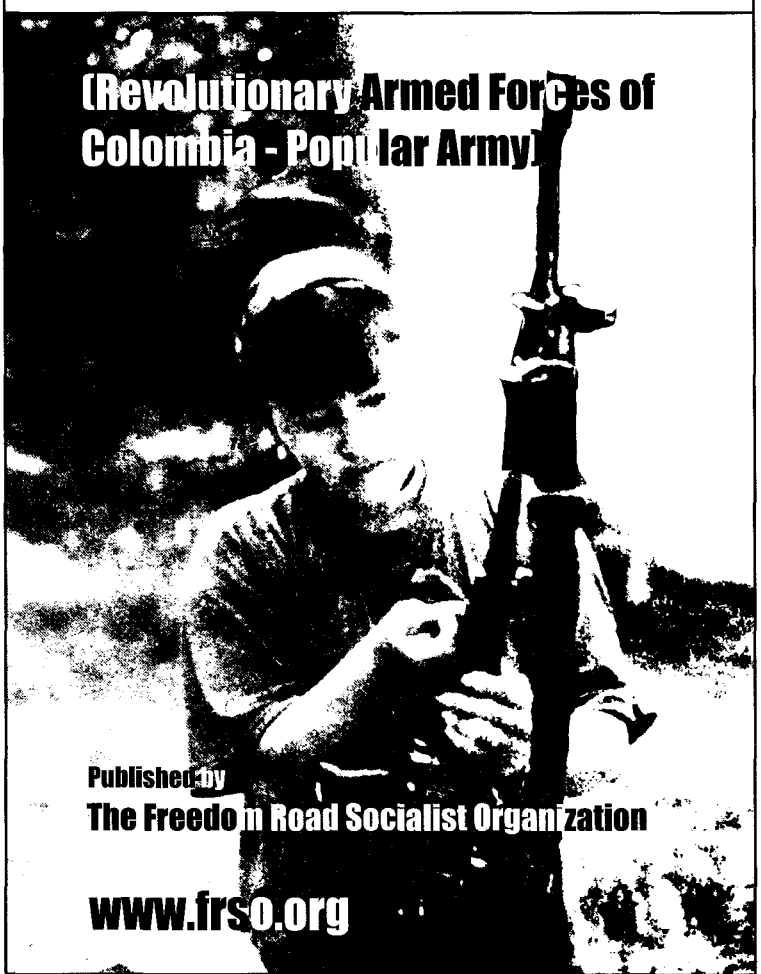
visit us on the web at **www.inthesetimes.com**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Available now:

Interview with the FARC-EP

16 pages w/rare photos



Published by
The Freedom Road Socialist Organization

www.frso.org

Make checks / m.o. payable to:
FIGHT BACK!
po box 582564
Minneapolis, MN 55440

$1.50 first copy
$1.00 each additional

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SAHE INSTITUTE FOR LIBERATION

The Sahe Institute for Liberation (SIL) is an organization of East Timorese scholars dedicated to the construction of a library, research institute, publication, and adult education center to serve the public of an independent East Timor. We are asking for donations of books on international politics, development, and education in English, Portuguese, and Indonesian. In the current era of negotiation with the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and multinationals, books providing an alternative to the global status quo now facing East Timor are especially important. Any titles you donate can be tax-deductible; via the East Timor Relief Fund, we have set up with the San Francisco-based human rights group Global Exchange. Titles should be sent to:

East Timor Book Drive, Attn: Todd LeFurge, c/o Todco Development 105 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, 415.626.9906

MONTHLY REVIEW (ISSN 0027 0520) is a publication of Monthly Review Foundation, a non-profit organization. It is published monthly except July and August, when bimonthly, and copyright ©2001, by Monthly Review. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send all address changes (Form 3579) to Monthly Review Foundation, 122 West 27 Street, New York, NY 10001. EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS: 122 West 27 Street, New York, NY 10001. Telephone: (212) 691-2555. Fax: (212) 727-3676. Email: editorial: mrmag@monthlyreview.org; circulation and subscriptions: mrsub@monthlyreview.org. Web: <www.monthlyreview.org>. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. MR is indexed in the PAIS Bulletin, Historical Abstracts, America: History and Life, Political Science Abstracts, and the Alternative Press Index, P.O.Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218, tel.: (410) 243-2471. NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTION: B. DeBoer, Inc., 113 E. Centre Street, Nutley, NJ 07110; Armadillo & Co., 5795 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232; Small Changes, 3443 Twelfth Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119; Central Books, 99 Wallis Road, London E9 5LN, England. SUBSCRIPTION PRICES: U.S. one-year $29, students and senior citizens $24; Canadian $40 (Can. dollars); UK £25; other foreign $37 (USD), students and senior citizens $28 (USD). Libraries and Institutions: U.S. $48; Foreign $55 (USD). Additional postage: First Class (U.S.) $20; Airmail: (Foreign, inc. Canada) $35 (USD)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(continued from inside front cover)
tionately African Americans) who did not have a felony record, but who were nonetheless to be dropped from the voter rolls on this basis. Estimates in some counties indicate that ChoicePoint's overall scrub list, called the "central voter file," contained errors in 15 percent of the cases, which would amount to more than seven thousand voters statewide. Florida is the only state to employ a private company to cleanse its voter registry. See: <http://www.salon.com/politics/feature/2000/12/04/voter_file/index.html>.

In this issue we are printing Adolph Reed Jr.'s important introduction to the new edition of Oliver Cox's, *Caste, Class, and Race*, which has been reissued in a shortened version entitled *Race* that includes the entire unexpurgated final section of Cox's book. (This new edition has only just been released by Monthly Review Press and also contains an essay on "The Life and Career of Oliver C. Cox by Herbert M. Hunter.) Reed's introduction points to the crucial importance of Cox's long-neglected work, which sought to link race, class, and capitalism within a broad historical perspective. We are also pleased to note that the Summer 2000 issue of *Review*, edited by Immanuel Wallerstein and published by the Fernand Braudel Center, Binghamton University, P.O. Box 6000, Binghamton, NY 13902, is devoted largely to Cox's contribution to world system theory. That issue contains an important article by Christopher A. McAuley, entitled "Oliver C. Cox's World-System: Insights, Omissions, and Speculations." Among the passages quoted from Cox in that article is the following: "Although the social processes of the capitalist system may encourage imitation of the practices of the leading societies, the system itself cannot accommodate indiscriminate advancement of peoples. The development of 'underdeveloped' countries cannot mean progress of those countries until they reach the status of the leader nations" (*Caste, Class and Race*, 171). We hope that this article and the reissue of the new edition of Cox's book will help generate widespread renewed interest in Cox's work.

Monthly Review is not well-suited to be a daily news journal, we aim at a longer view. But we do see pieces that illuminate a current event and are, in our opinion, worth bringing to your attention; for example, analyses that have appeared in the aftermath of the recent US elections. Our website <http://www.monthlyreview.org> will show a button marked "Current Commentary," where we will, as occasion demands and circumstances permit, post discussions of current events. Currently on the website readers will find commentary by Robert W. McChesney and Edward Greer on the outrageous manner in which George W. Bush became President of the United States.

We are pleased to announce that John Bellamy Foster's book *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (Monthly Review Press, 2000) was chosen for the annual book award given in 2000 by the Marxist Sociology section of the American Sociological Association.

A Tribute to Daniel Singer will be held in New York City on Saturday, March 3, 2001. Please join his friends from 3 to 5 pm at Saint Peter's Church on Lexington Avenue at 54th Street. Contact Percy Brazil at (860) 355-1723 for additional information.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (starred review)

"Enthralling and important ... Integrating unusual details and artful nuances ... Palmer creates a multi-layered but seamless portrait of four centuries of Western culture ..."*

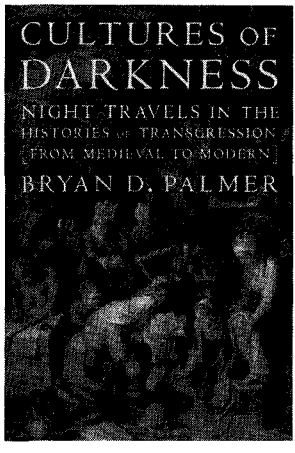
CULTURES OF DARKNESS

Night Travels in the Histories of Transgression

BRYAN D. PALMER

***"Palmer's bold theme is sustained by his ability to communicate his in-depth, far-ranging scholarship with a broad political vision ... and by his accessible and highly entertaining writing style."**

new



Peasants, religious heretics, witches, and contemporary youth gangs are all part of the rich tapestry of example and experience in *Cultures of Darkness*. Here, Bryan Palmer uses the night as metaphor and unifying theme to take an unflinching look at those dissident or oppositional cultures and movements to show how they were fueled, shaped, or distorted by the rise and transformation of capitalism from roughly 1200 to the present.

ISBN: 1-58367-027-0 paper $24 | 610pp | ISBN: 1-58367-026-2 cloth $55

Monthly Review Press **1.800.670.9499**

122 West 27th Street | New York, NY 10001 | Tel: (212) 691-2555 | Fax: (212) 727-3676

02>

7 42055 79772 5

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED